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**'Is there any word from the Lord?' : schools of contemporary Christian prophecy.**

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## ABSTRACT

The thesis begins by observing that Christian mention of contemporary prophecy or prophetic actions, reveals different understandings of prophecy. The thesis aims to clarify what contemporary Christian prophecy is, and to suggest what is needed for an adequate understanding of Christian prophecy. To do this, several “models” of prophecy are identified within Christianity. Four are selected for closer analysis: firstly the “Conservative-Protestant Model,” which suggests that prophecy is either no longer available or only in highly attenuated form; secondly the “Charismatic-Pentecostal Model,” which identifies prophecy with inspired revelatory oracles; thirdly the “Cultural-Political Model,” which relates prophecy to socio-political action; and fourthly the “Creational-Pagan Model,” which stresses mysticism, divine immanence and ecology. Each model is described using illustrative examples, to show how the models are differentiated in terms of their Message (what they talk about), their Manner (how prophecy is received and communicated), and Messenger (the carrier of prophecy). A new element of symbolic prophecy is noted, which uses objects and bodied spirituality to communicate. Models and examples are also situated in their social context, especially regarding class, capitalism, and postmodernity.

Combinations and crossovers between models are examined, especially the difficulty in moving from Charismatic-Pentecostal to Cultural-political prophecy, and the ease in moving from Cultural-political to Creational-Pagan prophecy. In addition, conflicts between models, within models, and “prophetic conflict” are described. Each model’s positive and negative aspects are examined. The thesis welcomes prophecy’s socio-political aspect, but notes the limitations imposed by Constantinianism, late capitalism and postmodernity. The thesis concludes that prophecy in these conditions requires strong notions of revelation, theological realism, and otherness, as well as authentic spiritual experience.

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## CHAPTER 1.

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1. CONSTRUCTING PROPHECY

##### **The Reason why**

This thesis arises from personal experience in urban ministry, during which I observed differences and conflicts in the understanding of prophecy. This occurred especially between those who saw prophecy in terms of socio-political involvement and those who interpreted it in terms of charismatic experiences. The thesis therefore originates in theological reflection upon pastoral practice.<sup>1</sup> Its purpose is eirenic - through clarification, to encourage the Church in its prophetic task. Scripture enjoins us to desire “especially the gift of prophecy”.<sup>2</sup> But what would this mean today? “Is there any word from the Lord?”<sup>3</sup> How would we know?

People commonly take prophecy to mean prediction, which is frequently seen as divination.<sup>4</sup> In (especially evangelical) Churches, prophecy implies particular interpretations of Biblical prophecy, used apologetically to demonstrate Christ’s fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy,<sup>5</sup> or eschatologically to discover signs of His second coming in contemporary events.<sup>6</sup> This thesis, however, focuses on what it means to claim to prophesy, to be prophetic, to be a prophet - today. To accomplish this the thesis compares the self-conceptions of several people who see themselves in prophetic terms. Prediction, exegesis and eschatology then find places within these discourses. Such a study has not been done before, making this thesis an original contribution to the field of prophetic studies.

##### **The Bible**

Although studies of Scriptural prophecy can be used to understand contemporary prophecy, interpreters possess the same preconceptions as the wider Church. Consequently, exegesis frequently becomes eisegesis. This is important pastorally because academics influence

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<sup>1</sup> cf. Martin Thornton, *The Function of Theology* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1968), p. 53

<sup>2</sup> *1 Corinthians 14.1*

<sup>3</sup> *Jeremiah 37.17*

<sup>4</sup> See Charles Neilson Gattey, *Prophecy and Prediction in the 20 th Century* (Wellingborough: The Aquarian Press, 1989)

<sup>5</sup> See Dale Rhoton, *The Logic of Faith* (Bromley: STL Books, 1972), pp. 51 ff

<sup>6</sup> See Hal Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (London: Lakeland, 1971)



people training for ministry. Many, like Hans Walter Wolff, also consciously relate their studies to current issues (in his case nuclear disarmament).<sup>7</sup> Gene Tucker<sup>8</sup> and David Petersen<sup>9</sup> have shown how scholars remake the prophets in their own intellectual and social image. Before Wellhausen (and still among evangelicals<sup>10</sup>), Biblical prophets were regarded as preachers of the Mosaic law. Wellhausen however recast them as moral reformers in an evolutionary development toward the higher religions.<sup>11</sup> Nineteenth century romantics saw prophets as poetic geniuses, and twentieth century America reconstructed them as precursors of the 1960s counterculture. Crisis theology conceived them as preachers addressing political and cultural issues,<sup>12</sup> while Lutheranism stressed their “spiritual” emphasis.<sup>13</sup>

Prophetic experience has been seen as an inner psychological “consciousness.”<sup>14</sup> Alfred Guillaume thought this was common to all near eastern religion,<sup>15</sup> and J. Lindblom saw it as a universal human experience of “ecstasy”.<sup>16</sup> Max Weber similarly located prophecy in the possession of personal “charisma”,<sup>17</sup> while in the 1960s prophecy was interpreted as intuitive states of consciousness.<sup>18</sup> Since then prophecy’s social dimension has been recovered. Gerhard Von Rad contributed to this recontextualisation when he described prophets as interpreters of tradition, rather than completely creative thinkers;<sup>19</sup> and Petersen depicted prophets playing a recognised social “role”.<sup>20</sup> Cross-cultural anthropological studies by Robert Wilson have also showed that vision trances and spirit possession

<sup>7</sup> Hans Walter Wolff, *Confrontations with Prophets* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), pp. 73 ff

<sup>8</sup> Gene M. Tucker, “The Role of the Prophets and the Role of the Church”, in David L. Petersen (Ed.), *Prophecy in Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press/London: SPCK, 1987), pp. 159 ff

<sup>9</sup> David L. Petersen, “Introduction: Ways of Thinking about Israel’s Prophets,” in *ibid*, pp. 1 ff

<sup>10</sup> See Leon J. Wood, *The Prophets of Israel* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), p.68

<sup>11</sup> See James L. Crenshaw, *Prophetic Conflict. Its Effect Upon Israelite Religion* (Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1971), pp. 6 f

<sup>12</sup> See R. B. Y. Scott, *The Relevance of the Prophets* (New York: Macmillan/ London: Collier-Macmillan, 1944), pp. 220 ff

<sup>13</sup> See John P. Milton, *Prophecy Interpreted* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1960), p. 8

<sup>14</sup> See Harold B. Knight, *The Hebrew Prophetic Consciousness* (London: Lutterworth, 1947)

<sup>15</sup> Alfred Guillaume, *Prophecy and Divination among the Hebrews and other Semites* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1938), pp. 61 ff

<sup>16</sup> J. Lindblom, *Prophecy in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962), p. 47 ff

<sup>17</sup> Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion* (London: Methuen & Co./Associated Book Publishers, 1966[1922]). pp. 46 ff

<sup>18</sup> See Martin J. Buss, “An Anthropological Perspective upon Prophetic Call Narratives,” in Robert C. Cully & Thomas W. Overholt (Eds.), *Anthropological Perspectives on Old Testament Prophecy. Semeia 21* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981), pp. 9 ff

<sup>19</sup> Gerhard Von Rad, *The Message of the Prophets* (London: SCM, 1968), p. 11

<sup>20</sup> David L. Petersen, *The Roles of Israel’s Prophets* (Sheffield: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament. Supplement Series 17, 1981), pp. 16 ff



characterise many “spiritual intermediaries”.<sup>21</sup> A neo-Wellhausen reaction, however, continues to depict the prophets as innovators - whether as existentialist preachers for Georg Fohrer,<sup>22</sup> or religious philosophers for Klaus Koch.<sup>23</sup>

Liberation theology also emphasises the social location and role of prophecy.<sup>24</sup> Consequently often scholars suggest liberation theology as a contemporary equivalent of Biblical prophecy.<sup>25</sup> Where liberation theology stresses Old Testament prophecy’s justice theme, however, the charismatic movement draws on New Testament prophecy. These developments together prompted a World Council of Churches Consultation in 1975 discussing New Testament prophecy.<sup>26</sup> Evangelical scholars meanwhile have moved from E. Earle Ellis’s depiction of early Christian prophets as preachers,<sup>27</sup> to an appreciation of charismatic utterances, although David Hill did so only at his publisher’s insistence.<sup>28</sup> It remained for Wayne Grudem’s seminal work to integrate evangelical and charismatic understandings,<sup>29</sup> which Max Turner has further developed.<sup>30</sup> David Aune however employed comparative religion and anthropology to contextualise prophecy as a “mantic” oracle,<sup>31</sup> while Clifford Hill suggests that personal charismatic experience is necessary to understand Biblical prophecy.<sup>32</sup> This raises the question of which pre-understanding is most helpful, and shows that to understand contemporary prophecy it is not sufficient to merely expound Scripture. The thesis is therefore not a hermeneutical study of Scripture. Neither is it an examination of theological accounts of prophecy since these too reveal similar preconceptions.

<sup>21</sup> Robert R. Wilson, *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), pp. 27 ff

<sup>22</sup> See Georg Fohrer, “Remarks on Modern Interpretation of the Prophets,” *JBL* (Vol. 80, 1961), pp. 309 ff

<sup>23</sup> See Klaus Koch, *The Prophets. Volume One. The Assyrian Period* (London: SCM, 1982[1978]), p. vii

<sup>24</sup> See Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1973[1971]), pp. 162 ff

<sup>25</sup> See John F. A. Sawyer, *Prophecy and the Biblical Prophets* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 157 ff

<sup>26</sup> See J. Panagopoulos (Ed.), *Prophetic Vocation in the New Testament and Today* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1977)

<sup>27</sup> E. Earle Ellis, “How the New Testament Uses the Old,” in I. Howard Marshall (Ed.), *New Testament Interpretation. Essays on Principles and Methods* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1979), pp. 199 ff

<sup>28</sup> David Hill, *New Testament Prophecy* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1979), p. xiii

<sup>29</sup> See Wayne Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians* (Washington: University Press of America, 1982)

<sup>30</sup> Max Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts Then and Now* (London: Paternoster, 1996), pp. 185

<sup>31</sup> David E. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids, MICH: Eerdmans, 1983), pp. 210 f

<sup>32</sup> Clifford Hill, *Prophecy Past and Present. An Exploration of the Prophetic Ministry in the Bible and the Church Today* (Guildford, Surrey: Eagle, 1995[1989]), pp. 28 f



## Modelling Prophecy

Max Turner notes, albeit referring only to charismatic prophecy, that there has been no “comprehensive critical discussion of prophecy in the modern church”.<sup>33</sup> This thesis fills that gap by undertaking a multi-disciplinary examination of contemporary prophetics, drawing on the methodologies of contemporary history, political sociology, and theology.

Although empirical studies can illuminate specific experiences, William James<sup>34</sup> and David Hay’s studies<sup>35</sup> lack a specifically Christian focus. Empirical theology moreover presupposes a certain understanding of prophecy as discrete psycho-spiritual experiences rather than, for example, political lifestyles. Mark Cartledge’s important M.A. dissertation examined only the charismatic experience of prophecy, and that within a middle class bracket;<sup>36</sup> while Margaret Poloma’s sociological assessment simply defends the Toronto blessing.<sup>37</sup>

Although the thesis rejects empiricism, however, the methodology includes empirical research:<sup>38</sup>

- 1) original taped qualitative interviews with prophetic practitioners (although some subjects were not available) and academics (of 1/2-2 hours);<sup>39</sup>
- 2) field visits to conferences, courses, services, and a visit to the USA in 1997;<sup>40</sup>
- 3) content analysis of books, magazines, publicity literature, leaflets, training materials, and audio or video recordings.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Turner, *op cit*, p. 314

<sup>34</sup> William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (London: Fontana, 1960)

<sup>35</sup> David Hay, *Exploring Inner Space* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982)

<sup>36</sup> Mark John Cartledge, *Prophecy in the Contemporary Church: A Theological Examination* (London: Oak Hill Theological College, August 1989)

<sup>37</sup> Margaret M. Poloma, *By Their Fruits...: A Sociological Assessment of the Toronto Blessing* (Akron, OH: Department of Sociology, The University of Akron, n.d.)

<sup>38</sup> See Michael Quinn Patton, *How To Use Qualitative Methods In Evaluation* (Newbury Park, CA/London: Sage, 1987), pp. 70 ff

<sup>39</sup> See pp. 363 ff

<sup>40</sup> See pp. 368 f

<sup>41</sup> See p. 372



The thesis will show that ‘prophecy’ has a spectrum, or family, of meanings. “A universally valid prophet is an abstraction.”<sup>42</sup> A form criticism of contemporary prophetic speech might be helpful,<sup>43</sup> but “forms” are located within ideological and material practices. Therefore, using the Biblical analogy of prophetic schools or guilds - the “sons of the prophets”<sup>44</sup> - this thesis suggests several *models* of prophetic ministry current in the Church. Each model represents different clusters of meanings, similar to Philip Wogaman’s concept of “generating centres” for Christian thought.<sup>45</sup> These are models, rather than ideal types, because they arise from the actors’ self-understanding and not abstractions. Furthermore, the overall framework comprises a ‘taxonomy’ not a ‘typology’,<sup>46</sup> because “taxis” implies arrangement or relationship between parts, not isolated types.<sup>47</sup> This taxonomy of models provides an original framework to compare prophetic conceptions and clarify disagreements.

Examples of each model have been chosen as illustrations. Each was chosen because they exemplify salient features of each model. Although not complete ethnographic studies, they include new findings which make original research contributions to prophetic studies.

## **Taxonomy**

The four models examined in the thesis are as follows:

### **1. Conservative-Protestant: God Speaks What He Has Spoken**

- the classical Protestant understanding that the gifts of the Spirit (including prophecy) have ceased. The nearest thing to prophecy (according to some) is preaching - the contemporary proclamation of God’s Word. This is a (negative) contrast model with which to compare other (positive) conceptions.

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<sup>42</sup> Hans-Jürgen Greschat, “‘The Founder’ of prophet movements and the phenomenology of religion,” in A. F. Walls & Wilbert Shenk (Eds.), *Exploring New Religious Movements. Essays in Honor of Harold W. Turner* (Elkhart, I: Mission Focus Publications, 1990), p. 25

<sup>43</sup> See Claus Westermann, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1967)

<sup>44</sup> *2 Kings 2. 3 f*

<sup>45</sup> J. Philip Wogaman, *Christian Perspectives on Politics* (London: SCM, 1988), p. 102

<sup>46</sup> cf. Os Guinness, *The Dust of Death* (London: IVP, 1973), for a similar taxonomic approach to religion.

<sup>47</sup> See *Oxford English Dictionary. Volume XVII* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p. 681



## **2. Charismatic-Pentecostal: God Speaks Today**

- the reception of revelatory verbal or visionary messages, or intuitions from God through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Prophecy is oracular speech and action, usually addressed to individuals or churches.

## **3. Cultural-Political: God Speaks For The Poor**

- the understanding, derived from Old Testament prophecy, that God is biased toward the oppressed, and that to be prophetic today involves a similar preferential option for the poor.

## **4. Creational-Pagan: God Speaks Within Nature**

- equivalent to the 'new consciousness', which is ecologically aware and conceives of God within the centre of one's being. To be 'prophetic' involves a mystical commitment to planetary justice.

Because the field includes popular preachers and academic theologians, some sections will rely more on 'popular' than academic sources. Furthermore, the list of models is not exhaustive. In particular, there are two others: Catholic-Papal and Cultic-Primal. These correspond respectively to Roman Catholic mysticism and Marianism, and the African indigenous Churches. Limitations of space, however, prevent their inclusion in the thesis. Moreover, to a degree they overlap other models. For example, Catholicism influences charismatic renewal, liberation theology, and Creation Spirituality. African indigenous Churches prophetic understandings combine Charismatic-Pentecostal elements and indigenous religious characteristics resonant of the Creational-Pagan model.<sup>48</sup> James Ozige, Apostle of the Cherubim and Seraphim Church, speaks of prophecy in Pentecostal terms,<sup>49</sup> and Jeri Jehu-Appiah, leader of the Musama Christo Disco Church, denies charges of syncretism.<sup>50</sup> The visions of S. B. J. Oshoffa, founder of the Celestial Church of Christ, seem, however, more akin to animism.<sup>51</sup> It is important nevertheless to include the voices of black people and of women. The thesis therefore includes Cornel West's philosophical Pragmatism and Mary Grey's Ecofeminism as distinctive prophetic contributions.

<sup>48</sup> See James Ashdown, *Prophets and Prayer. Interviews with leaders of African Churches in London* (London: Zebra Project, n.d.)

<sup>49</sup> James Ozige, *Interview 1* (29.9.97)

<sup>50</sup> Jeri Jehu-Appiah, *Interview* (4.12.97)

<sup>51</sup> See Olu Obafemi, *Pastor S. B. J. Oshoffa. God's 20 th Century Gift to Africa* (Lagos: Pathway Publishers Ltd., 1986), pp. 1 ff



Articulating Models

The thesis shows that models differ not in any distinct activity, but in their understanding of *Messenger*, *Message* and *Manner*.

- a) The *Messenger* is the prophet.
- b) The *Message* is the particular concerns s/he has.
- c) The *Manner* is the way in which the message is received or revealed, and the style of ministry, action or communication employed.

The models in this thesis and these three analytical tools are original and independently arrived at from personal observation of the Church in the United States and the United Kingdom; and socio-political and theological reflection on it. Nevertheless, other studies have used models to clarify related issues: for example Henri Desroche on messianisms,<sup>52</sup> Howard Snyder on the “Kingdom”<sup>53</sup> and Avery Dulles on revelation.<sup>54</sup>

Desroche’s typology of messianic “person”, “Kingdom,” and “strategy of computations” overlaps somewhat with *Messenger*, *Message*, and *Manner*.<sup>55</sup> For the four models examined in the thesis, the prophetic “person” or *Messenger* can be summarised as follows:

MODEL	MESSENGER/PERSON
Conservative-Protestant	Scripture (Preachers)
Charismatic-Pentecostal	prophets
Cultural-Political	the poor, activists, theologians
Creational-Pagan	women, indigenous peoples, theologians

<sup>52</sup> Henri Desroche, *The Sociology of Hope* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979)  
<sup>53</sup> Howard Snyder, “Models of the Kingdom: Sorting out the Practical Meaning of God’s Reign,” *Transformation* (January 1993), pp. 1 ff  
<sup>54</sup> Avery Dulles, *Models of Revelation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1992)  
<sup>55</sup> Desroche, *op cit*, p. 87 ff

Desroche’s “Kingdom” type similarly correspond to the *Message* of the prophetic model:<sup>56</sup>

MODEL	MESSAGE (Desroche’s Kingdom Types)
Conservative-Protestant	religious or ecclesiastical
Charismatic-Pentecostal	“ “ “
Cultural-Political	political
Creational-Pagan	cosmic

Snyder’s typology of the Kingdom identifies seven models: future hope, inner experience, institutional Church, counter-system, political state, and Christianized society. Although helpful for understanding eschatology, Snyder’s framework is less useful for the broader prophetic models in this thesis, in which eschatology is only a facet. Conservative-Protestant and Charismatic-Pentecostal prophecy would tend to stress the first three, Cultural-Political and Creational-Pagan the last five of Snyder’s Kingdom models:

MODEL	MESSAGE (Snyder’s Kingdom Types)
Conservative-Protestant	future hope, inner experience, institutional Church
Charismatic-Pentecostal	“ “ “ “ “ “
Cultural-Political	institutional Church, counter-system, political state, Christianized society
Creational-Pagan	“ “ “ “

<sup>56</sup> *ibid.* pp. 90 ff

Regarding the *Manner* of reception, the prophetic models experience revelation largely according to Dulles's categories:

MODEL	MANNER OF REVELATION (Dulles)
Conservative-Protestant	doctrine
Charismatic-Pentecostal	inner experience
Cultural-Political	historical (political) events
Creational-Pagan	new awareness

Geerhardus Vos's treatment of Biblical prophecy complements Dulles's models. Vos distinguishes the "reception", "communication" and "content" of prophecy.<sup>57</sup> The *Message* corresponds to his "content"; and *Manner* incorporates his "reception" and "communication". Vos's "reception" refers to the mode of revelation, and "communication" to the ministry style. The latter corresponds to Desroche's "computations" which form the strategy for realising or proclaiming the Kingdom.<sup>58</sup> If Vos's categories are applied to the prophetic models in this thesis, they yield the following results:

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<sup>57</sup> Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology. Old and New Testaments* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1975[1948]), , pp. 212 ff

<sup>58</sup> Desroche, *op cit*, pp. 92 ff



MODEL	MANNER OF RECEPTION OF REVELATION	MANNER OF COMMUNICATION OF REVELATION
Conservative-Protestant	intellect (Scriptural exegesis)	preaching & Bible study
Charismatic-Pentecostal	inspiration	preaching & supernatural knowledge
Cultural-Political	intellect (social analysis)	writing/lecturing & political action
Creational-Pagan	intuition (non-rational knowing)	writing/lecturing & ritual

These prophetic models are however analytical distinctions. Empirically, they are not always clear. As Desroche notes regarding his typology, there are frequent “amalgamations”.<sup>59</sup> After four chapters examining instances of the models, the thesis will therefore analyse areas where the models inter-react.

Firstly, there are *combinations*: and *crossovers* - people practising more than one model, or those who move from one to another. Combinations highlight the different uses to which the models are put, and the practice of distinct models by individuals; while crossovers indicate the experience of temporal change. These chapters will examine the factors that inhibit or encourage combinations and crossovers. Two particular developments examined will be the difficult Conservative-Protestant to Charismatic-Pentecostal transition, and the relatively easy Cultural-Political to Creational-Pagan transition.

Secondly, there are *conflicts* concerning prophecy. These include *Inter-Model Conflict*, and *Intra-Model Conflict*. It is within the latter that authentic *Prophetic Conflict* occurs, between competing prophets.<sup>60</sup> That chapter discusses the desirability and inevitability of conflict,

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<sup>59</sup> *ibid*, pp. 122 ff  
<sup>60</sup> James Crenshaw, *op cit*



and the factors influencing conflict. In addition, there is *Institutional Conflict*, between prophets and institutional ecclesiastical authorities; and the problem of *investigating* true and false prophecy.

## 2. CONTEXTUALISING PROPHECY

### Social Location

Although Charismatic-Pentecostal prophecy has a unique mystique surrounding the person of the prophet as the mouthpiece of God, prophetic people generally appear individualistic. It is nevertheless important to examine their social context - both their immediate setting, and the wider culture. The context shapes the *Message*, but also has implications for the *Messenger* - the ecclesial or social group s/he belongs to, and the *Manner* - the organisational means by which prophecy is promulgated. The prophet does not depend only on personal ability, but on “confirmation” by others.<sup>61</sup> Thomas Overholt suggests a “feedback” relationship between prophet and audience,<sup>62</sup> in which expectations enable the “recognition” of prophetic behaviour.<sup>63</sup> As Weber wrote,<sup>64</sup> attracting followers is one of the preconditions for prophetic “take off”.<sup>65</sup> This explains the difference between for example Alex Buchanan<sup>66</sup> and Clifford Hill. Both were prominent (Charismatic-Pentecostal) prophetic figures in the early 1980s, but only Hill created an organisation.

There is a new dimension when acolytes gather and form a *Support Group*.<sup>67</sup> Where the prophet is outside established institutions, s/he may then form his or her own organisation or ministry, with its own staff.<sup>68</sup> These groupings, and the informal networks characteristic of contemporary religion,<sup>69</sup> form “subsocietal plausibility structures” for prophetic people.<sup>70</sup> They also illustrate Weber’s concepts of “routinisation” and “institutionalisation” of charisma which, while constraining spontaneity, nevertheless ensure continuity.<sup>71</sup> Michael Hill argues these processes are also balanced by the countervailing “transmission” of charisma, which either maintains the original prophetic

<sup>61</sup> Anthony Storr, *Feet of Clay. A Study of Gurus* (London: HarperCollins, 1996), pp. 209 f

<sup>62</sup> Thomas Overholt, *Channels of Prophecy. The Social Dynamics of Prophetic Activity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), pp. 18 ff

<sup>63</sup> See Peter Worsley, *The Trumpet Shall Sound* (London: Paladin, 1970[1957]), p. 288

<sup>64</sup> Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, p. 60

<sup>65</sup> See W. W. Rostow, *Politics and the Stages of Growth* (London/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 54 ff

<sup>66</sup> See Alex Buchanan, *Prophecy* (Tonbridge: Sovereign World, 1991)

<sup>67</sup> cf. Robert Wilson, *op cit*, p. 51

<sup>68</sup> See Max Weber, *Economy and Society. An Outline of Interpretative Sociology* (New York: Bedminster Press, 1968), p. 1119

<sup>69</sup> See Michael York, *The Emerging Network. A Sociology of the New Age and Neo-Pagan Movements* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1995), pp. 324 ff

<sup>70</sup> Meredith McGuire, *Religion. The Social Context* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1992), pp. 38 ff

<sup>71</sup> See Weber, *Economy and Society*, pp. 1121 ff



impulse or prompts the “resurgence” of “latent charisma”.<sup>72</sup>

Weber also distinguishes between “emissary” prophets who proclaim a message and “exemplary” prophets who teach by example.<sup>73</sup> The distinction does not apply, however, to the examples in this thesis. Perhaps because they originate within Christianity,<sup>74</sup> they spread their message by word and example, although the conversionism of Conservative-Protestantism and Charismatic-Pentecostalism tend toward the “emissary”, and the lifestyle emphasis of Cultural-Political and Creational-Pagan models toward Weber’s “emissary” types. Furthermore, none are ‘founders.’ Operating within the Christian tradition, they could be described as *minor* not *major* prophets. Consequently, opposing Colin Wilson’s existentialist conception, they are not always “outsiders”.<sup>75</sup> The opposition of prophet and priest, is a Protestant stereotype. In practice Old Testament prophets often worked within the political and religious establishment.<sup>76</sup> Even when criticising the Church, the prophet desires its renewal. Prophetic groups therefore are what Anthony Wallace called “Revitalisation Movements”.<sup>77</sup> These arise in situations of societal “stress” or “cultural distortion”, and aim to rearrange the mental “mazeway” by which people cope with change.

This highlights “social location” as a major determinant of prophecy, as Peter Berger suggested.<sup>78</sup> Embracing both geographical and social contexts, this implies not only contextual theology, but also contextual prophecy.<sup>79</sup> A political economy of prophecy<sup>80</sup> will locate it socially, especially in relation to social class. Despite criticisms,<sup>81</sup> a class analysis drawing on Nicos Poulantzas’s work will emphasise questions of power and social location. Especially relevant is his study of class fractions, power fetishism,<sup>82</sup> and the new petty

<sup>72</sup> Michael Hill, *A Sociology of Religion* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1973), p. 176

<sup>73</sup> See Max Weber, “The Social Psychology of the World’s Religions,” in *From Max Weber. Essays in Sociology* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1919/70), p. 291

<sup>74</sup> See Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, p. 56

<sup>75</sup> See Colin Wilson, *The Outsider* (London: Picador, 1978[1956]), pp. 216 ff

<sup>76</sup> See Bernhard Lang, *Monotheism and the Prophetic Minority* (Sheffield: The Almond Press, 1983), pp. 89 ff

<sup>77</sup> See Anthony F. C. Wallace, “Revitalization Movements,” in William A. Lessa & Evon Z. Vogt (Eds.), *Reader in Comparative Religion. An Anthropological Approach* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), pp. 421 ff

<sup>78</sup> See Peter L. Berger, “Charisma and Religious Innovation: The Social Location of Israelite Prophecy,” *American Sociological Review* (Vol. 28, No. 6, 1963), pp. 940 ff

<sup>79</sup> See Laurie Green, *Power to the Powerless. Theology Brought to Life* (Basingstoke: Marshall Morgan & Scott, 1987), pp. 129 ff

<sup>80</sup> cf. Julio de Santa Ana, Konrad Raiser & Ulrich Duchrow, *The Political Economy of the Holy Spirit* (Geneva: WCC, 1990)

<sup>81</sup> See R. W. Connell, “A Critique of the Althusserian Approach to Class,” in Anthony Giddens & David Held (Eds.), *Classes, Power, and Conflict* (London: Macmillan, 1982), pp. 130 ff

<sup>82</sup> Nicos Poulantzas, *Political Power and Social Classes* (London: Verso, 1978[1968]), pp. 84 ff, 244



bourgeoisie.<sup>83</sup> A dynamic note will be added, however, through Eugen Schoenfeld's concepts of the "dominant", "retrenching" and "ascending" class;<sup>84</sup> and Raymond Williams' parallel notion of "dominant", "residual" and "emerging" ideology."<sup>85</sup> Although Schoenfeld and Williams use "ascending" and "emergent" to express their political preferences, this thesis employs these terms to describe fluidity in relative class positions. Attributing class orientation, however, does not imply anything about an idea's truthfulness. Neither does class analysis mean that a person or group belongs to a specific class. Rather it suggests that their outlook corresponds to the ideology "characteristic" of that class.<sup>86</sup>

This relationship between prophecy and social context requires comparisons with millennarian studies,<sup>87</sup> although theoretical definitions which over-identify prophets and millennarianism are partial and exclude other understandings.<sup>88</sup> Also whereas Wallace's revitalization movements operated within small, homogeneous tribal societies, today's prophets live within global, pluralistic and technological culture. This makes it questionable whether prophetic revitalisation can succeed today. The thesis will therefore examine the revitalisation potential of each model and its exemplars, and the conclusion will investigate the very possibility of prophecy in contemporary culture.

### Modifying Context

Is this sociological examination justified? John Milbank resists the use of social science by Christians to analyse the Church. Instead, he sees theology as itself constituting a social theory,<sup>89</sup> although he acknowledges theology's "contingent historical construct",<sup>90</sup> and sees in the Church's empirical corruption the existence of "anti-Church".<sup>91</sup> According to Duncan Forrester, however, sociology contributes what theology lacks - an examination of the Church as social structure.<sup>92</sup> If social determination is an expression of sin, as Jacques

<sup>83</sup> Nicos Poulantzas, *Classes in Contemporary Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1978), pp. 191 ff

<sup>84</sup> See Eugen Schoenfeld, "Militant and submissive religions: class, religion and ideology," *The British Journal of Sociology* (No. 43, 1993), pp. 128 ff

<sup>85</sup> See Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 121 ff

<sup>86</sup> *ibid*, p. 55

<sup>87</sup> See Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia. An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1936)

<sup>88</sup> See Kenelm Burridge, *New Heaven New Earth. A Study of Millenarian Activities* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1969), p. 154

<sup>89</sup> John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), pp. 248 f

<sup>90</sup> *ibid*, p. 2

<sup>91</sup> *ibid*, p. 433

<sup>92</sup> See Duncan B. Forrester, *Theology and Politics* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), p. 129



Ellul suggests,<sup>93</sup> then it will illuminate the likely failure of revitalisation attempts in a contemporary application of “total depravity”.<sup>94</sup> The Church suffers a “double polarity” in all its aspects,<sup>95</sup> including its prophesying, in which it enters the “ambiguities of life”.<sup>96</sup> Not that there are two Churches, but a “paradoxical identity” between the stereoscopic views from above and below.<sup>97</sup> Its social determination does not contradict the Church’s sacramental function, but rather constitutes it;<sup>98</sup> its glory veiled by weakness.<sup>99</sup>

The approach therefore differs from Peter Worsley, who reduced the prophet to a social function, thereby elevating *message* above *messenger*.<sup>100</sup> He ignored the creative contribution of the subject, and the social reality of revelation. Without the *messenger*, there is no *message*. While not subscribing to a great-man theory of prophecy,<sup>101</sup> there is the opposite error of neglecting the individual subject.<sup>102</sup> “Group prophecy” by organisations such as Christian CND,<sup>103</sup> is an expression of Cultural-Political and Creational-Pagan prophecy. But even here, groups form around key people (e.g. Bruce Kent), although only the Charismatic-Pentecostal model elevates prophetic ‘office’ into a distinct hypostasis.

In addition, although the adjective “prophetic” is used metaphorically for perceptiveness or utopianism, Weber recognised that revelation is essential to prophecy.<sup>104</sup> This however means revelation as experience rather than doctrine. If the founding Christ-event is the primary, and its Scriptural witness the secondary revelation, then contemporary prophecy is ternary revelation, albeit one belonging to the non-authoritative sphere of “private revelation”.<sup>105</sup> Besides revelation the thesis highlights other theological factors, for example Biblical authority, Christian uniqueness, continuity with tradition, eschatology,

<sup>93</sup> See Jacques Ellul, *The Ethics of Freedom* (London/Oxford: Mowbray, 1976), p. 50

<sup>94</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion. Vol. I* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Education, 1936), pp. 312 ff

<sup>95</sup> J. G. Davies, “Church,” in Alan Richardson (Ed.), *A Dictionary of Christian Theology* (London: SCM, 1969), p. 65

<sup>96</sup> Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology. Volume III* (London: SCM, 1978), pp. 162 ff

<sup>97</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* (London: SCM, 1977), pp. 21 f

<sup>98</sup> See Karl Rahner, “The Sacraments,” in Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations. Vol. IV* (Baltimore: Helicon Press/ London: DLT, 1966), pp. 240 f

<sup>99</sup> See Edward Schillebeeckx, *Christ the Sacrament of Encounter with God* (London/New York: Sheed & Ward, 1963), pp. 253 f

<sup>100</sup> e.g. Worsley, *op cit*, pp. 290 f

<sup>101</sup> cf. E. H. Carr, *What is History?* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964), pp. 53 ff

<sup>102</sup> See Richard Morgan, “Prophetic Individuality,” *Amvil* (Vol. 9, No. 2, 1992), pp. 137 ff

<sup>103</sup> See Robin Gill, *Beyond Decline. A Challenge to the Churches* (London: SCM, 1988), pp. 46 ff

<sup>104</sup> Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, p. 47, 51

<sup>105</sup> See Karl Rahner, “Private Revelation,” in Karl Rahner (Ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Theology. A Concise Sacramentum Mundi* (London: Burns & Oates, 1975), pp. 1471 ff



denominational ecclesiology, and spirituality. Philosophical influences, like epistemology and ontology, are also analysed, as are the implications of theodicy<sup>106</sup> and a philosophy of history for prophecy.<sup>107</sup>

### Postmodernity

Contemporary transformations of spirituality require diachronic as well as synchronic analysis, in order to highlight modifications within and between models. There is however also a revival of interest in prophecy as such, partly as a response to the approaching millennium,<sup>108</sup> but also as an intuition of cultural change. Postmodernism describes this apocalyptic feeling of closure, an ending upon western culture, in which former revelation is no longer believable.<sup>109</sup> Following Tillich, today's prophets might be described as having a seismic "sensorium in their souls" which registers the "shaking of the foundations".<sup>110</sup> They want not only to reverse religious decay, however, but to halt the "mazeway disintegration" of the culture.<sup>111</sup> For some this is not explicit,<sup>112</sup> although they still express the unconscious grief of society.<sup>113</sup>

As society's "structure of feeling" changes,<sup>114</sup> there emerges a new "religious sensibility".<sup>115</sup> To effect this paradigm shift requires a Weberian "prophetic break".<sup>116</sup> Since culture as well as nature abhors a vacuum, a new basis for social integration is needed to overcome postmodern nihilistic relativism, hence the postmodern resurrection of the "sacred".<sup>117</sup> The ensuing re-enchantment of the world witnesses the return of "repressed" aspects of human existence,<sup>118</sup> and the revival of "residual" cultural forms.<sup>119</sup> Instead of

<sup>106</sup> See Meredith McGuire, *op cit*, p. 82

<sup>107</sup> See Jurgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope* (London: SCM, 1967), p. 260

<sup>108</sup> See Damian Thompson, *The End of Time. Faith and Fear in the Shadow of the Millennium* (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1996)

<sup>109</sup> See Thomas J. J. Altizer, "The Beginning and Ending of Revelation," in Robert P. Scharlemann (Ed.), *Theology at the End of the Century. A Dialogue on the Postmodern* (Charlottesville/London 1990), p. 103

<sup>110</sup> Paul Tillich, *The Shaking of the Foundations* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962[1949]), p. 17

<sup>111</sup> Anthony F. C. Wallace, "Mazeway Disintegration. The Individual's Perception of Socio-Cultural Disorganization", *Human Organization* (Vol. 16, No. 2, Summer 1957), pp. 23 ff

<sup>112</sup> See Bryan Wilson, *Magic and the Millennium* (St. Albans: Paladin, 1975), p. 488

<sup>113</sup> See Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination* (London: SCM, 1992[1978]), pp. 44 ff

<sup>114</sup> Williams, *op cit*, pp. 128 ff

<sup>115</sup> Joseph P. Chinnici, "New Religious Movements and the Structure of Religious Sensibility," in Jacob Needleman & Eileen Barker, *Understanding New Religious Movements* (New York: Seabury Press, 1978), pp. 26 ff

<sup>116</sup> Talcott Parsons, "Introduction," in Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, pp. lxv f

<sup>117</sup> See Barry Smart, *Postmodernity* (London/New York 1993), p. 89

<sup>118</sup> See Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (London/New York: Verso, 1991), p. xv

<sup>119</sup> Williams, *op cit*, p. 122



being an absolutist meta-narrative, however, revelation becomes local, relativistic and particular.<sup>120</sup>

The resultant “quietist revival”<sup>121</sup> is a practical outworking of Berger’s “inductive option”.<sup>122</sup> He suggests that as rationalist criticism removed external, objective props, the only foundation for religious faith was “experience.” Both popular<sup>123</sup> and academic commentators<sup>124</sup> note that the New Age movement and fundamentalism are competing examples of this inward turn. Harvey Cox agrees, but suggests Pentecostalism rather than fundamentalism as its exemplar, because of Pentecostalism’s reliance on “experience” not dogma.<sup>125</sup> Despite differences between Pentecostalism and fundamentalism, however, they share common attitudes. Cox reads into Pentecostalism his own theologically liberal preferences, when he treats Biblical literalism as an accidental accretion to Pentecostalism.<sup>126</sup> As Dayton writes, Pentecostalism’s “subjectivizing hermeneutic” differs from evangelical dogmatism, but inherits pietism’s devotional reading of Scripture which is no less literalist.<sup>127</sup>

### Symbolic Prophecy

Furthermore, Pentecostalism represents incomplete postmodernisation. Its literalism and dogmatism, and its stress on emotional registers of Divine activity mark it as respectively a conservative and romantic reaction to modernity. Cox’s earlier insight was more accurate - that postmodern religion concentrates on the “body”<sup>128</sup> rather than the emotions.<sup>129</sup> Divine activity and revelation are “recorded” on the “surface” of the body.<sup>130</sup> Recent charismatic

<sup>120</sup> See Walter Brueggemann, *The Bible and Postmodern Imagination. Texts Under Negotiation* (London: SCM, 1993), p. 10

<sup>121</sup> See Robert Wuthnow, “Political Aspects of the Quietistic Revival,” in Thomas Robbins & Dick Anthony (Eds.), *In Gods We Trust. New Patterns of Religious Pluralism* (New Brunswick/London: Transaction Books, 1981), pp. 229 ff

<sup>122</sup> Peter L. Berger, *The Heretical Imperative. Contemporary Possibilities of Religious Affirmation* (London: Collins, 1980), pp. 62 ff

<sup>123</sup> See Rachel Storm, *In Search of Heaven on Earth* (London: Bloomsbury, 1991), p. 2

<sup>124</sup> See Keith Ward, *A Vision To Pursue. Beyond the Crisis in Christianity* (London: SCM, 1991), 203 f

<sup>125</sup> See Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven. The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century* (London: Cassell, 1996)

<sup>126</sup> *ibid*, pp. 303 f

<sup>127</sup> Donald Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1987), p. 23

<sup>128</sup> See John H. Simpson, “Religion and the Body. Sociological Themes and Prospects,” in William H. Swatos Jr. (Ed.), *A Future For Religion? New Paradigms for Social Analysis* (Newbury Park/London/New Delhi: Sage, 1993), pp. 149 ff

<sup>129</sup> See Daniele Hervieu-Léger, “Present-Day Emotional Renewals. The End of Secularization or the End of Religion?” in Swatos, *op cit*, pp. 129 ff

<sup>130</sup> See Charles E. Winquist, *Desiring Theology* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 54



phenomena (e.g. the “Toronto blessing”) illustrate this shift,<sup>131</sup> but Creational-Pagan prophecy is the most complete postmodern prophetic model because of its non-dualist location of the Divine within material reality, rather than a separate spiritual realm. It therefore appreciates sexuality and recovers ritual, as evidenced in “post-charismatic” alternative worship.<sup>132</sup> As traditional religious symbols have lost their psychic power the search for new symbolic resources has proceeded. This means, however, more than stating that all religious meetings contain unconscious ritual.<sup>133</sup> Today there is a deliberate creation of set rituals. In addition, although ritual studies stress bodied spirituality, they assume ritual is repeatable.<sup>134</sup> Today’s neo-ritualism, however, is spontaneous or limited to single occasions. Contemporary ritual moreover does not reinforce a single religious framework which functions to integrate a small society. Rather, its function is individual, psychological integration.<sup>135</sup> These qualifications limit the application of anthropological ritual studies to western society.<sup>136</sup>

It appears that, to use James Pratt’s distinction, “objective worship” is replacing “subjective worship”.<sup>137</sup> Catholic sacramentalism seems well-suited to this development, but although the means may have become objective, effectivity is still subjectively measured in the consciousness of the individual rather than objectively satisfying God through religious service. Nevertheless, neo-ritualism is producing a new form of *Symbolic Prophecy*. Instead of Pentecostal miracle competing with Catholic liturgy to mediate God’s presence,<sup>138</sup> prophecy and ritual combine to communicate revelation. Rather than the static identification of cultus with conservatism, neo-ritualism may assume the dynamic impetus of prophetic religion, as Henri Bergson described it.<sup>139</sup>

<sup>131</sup> Stuart Murray, *Interview* (31.1.96)

<sup>132</sup> Doug Gay, *Interview* (14.2.96)

<sup>133</sup> See Meredith McGuire, *op cit*, p. 17

<sup>134</sup> See Evan M. Zeusse, “Ritual,” in Mircea Eliade (Ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Religion Volume 12* (New York: Macmillan, 1987), p. 406

<sup>135</sup> See Bani Shorter, *Susceptible to the Sacred. The Psychological Experience of Ritual* (London/New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 33

<sup>136</sup> See Mark Searle, “Ritual,” in Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainwright, Edward Yarnold & Paul Bradshaw (Eds.), *The Study of Liturgy* (London: SPCK, 1992), p. 58

<sup>137</sup> James Bissett Pratt, *The Religious Consciousness. A Psychological Study* (New York: Macmillan, 1948), pp. 290 ff

<sup>138</sup> See Furio Colombo, *God in America. Religion and Politics in the United States* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), p. 27

<sup>139</sup> Henri Bergson, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion* (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1954), p. 240



Postmodernity may therefore generate a new form of prophecy which can “disclose” the depth dimension of reality.<sup>140</sup> But is this simply a “residual” reaction to modernity, or the “emergence” of something new?<sup>141</sup> For example, Vilfredo Pareto noted the rhythmical oscillation between periods of rationalism and irrationalism.<sup>142</sup> The new paradigm, however, (of which the Creational-Pagan prophetic model is one expression) is more than a continuation of Vician “ricorsi”.<sup>143</sup> It is the synthesis for the thesis-antithesis relationship between rationalism and romanticism. Its bodied spirituality overcomes the dualism of idealism and materialism by locating the Divine in nature, both ecological and egological.

### Critique

The valorising of matter while arising from environmental concerns, also comes from the new “global” context.<sup>144</sup> The latter derives partly from late capitalist globalism and the geopolitical reach of United States power, mirrored in the itinerary of itinerant preachers. As capitalism’s emphasis shifts from production to consumption, it favours a focus on hedonism and the body,<sup>145</sup> and as economic power is further removed from the individual employee, religion loses its public dimension and assumes privatised functions of personal satisfaction.<sup>146</sup> Each prophetic example will therefore be situated in this socio-economic context which truncates their respective revitalising aspirations.

The critique will proceed finally from sociological to theological considerations. In order to suggest ways of constructing a more adequate prophetic model, the conclusion dialogues especially with Reformed theology, including the Radical Reformation tradition, and also incorporates insights from Catholic and charismatic thinking.

<sup>140</sup> See Ian T. Ramsey, *Religious Language* (London: SCM, 1967[1957]), p. 112

<sup>141</sup> See Williams, *op cit*, pp. 121 ff

<sup>142</sup> Vilfredo Pareto, *A Treatise on General Sociology* (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1963[1935]), pp. 1131, 1677

<sup>143</sup> See Werner J. Cahnman, “Vico and Historical Sociology,” in Giorgio Tagliacozzo (Ed.), *Vico and Contemporary Thought. Vol. 2, Social Research* (Winter 1976), p. 833

<sup>144</sup> See Robert Wuthnow, “Religious Movements and the Transition in World Order,” in Jacob Needleman & Eileen Barker, *Understanding New Religious Movements* (New York: Seabury Press, 1978), pp. 63 ff

<sup>145</sup> See John H. Simpson, *op cit*, p. 156

<sup>146</sup> See Benton Johnson, “A Sociological Perspective on the New Religions,” in Robbins & Anthony, *op cit*, p. 53



## CHAPTER 2

### THE CONSERVATIVE-PROTESTANT MODEL OF PROPHECY

#### GOD SPEAKS WHAT HE HAS SPOKEN

## I. BASIC CESSATIONISM

### Introduction

The Conservative-Protestant model of prophecy corresponds to conservative evangelicalism or fundamentalism. It is different from other models, because as James Barr has written, fundamentalism is a reactive, “negative” stance framed by resistance to liberal theology on one hand and Pentecostalism on the other.<sup>147</sup> Hence its model of prophecy is defined by what it is not, rather than any positive notion. There is no prophetic *Messenger*, but merely the *Manner* of proclaiming the Biblical *Message*. Consequently, there is not the same construction or prominence of prophetic people. This model is therefore treated differently than the other three. The chapter outlines the model and its development, rather than giving accounts of particular ministries.

Conservative hostility to prophecy does not arise simply from criticism of particular charismatic utterances, although attacks on their “promise box” banality and abuse of power,<sup>148</sup> or the “trivial” nature of their pronouncements are frequent.<sup>149</sup> Rather there is serious theological objection to the very notion of extra-biblical prophecy. This derives from the Protestant Reformation, in particular the legacy of Calvin. He defended the principle of *Sola Scriptura* against Papal authority on the right, but also against Anabaptist spiritualisers on the left, who claimed contemporary revelations from the Spirit.<sup>150</sup> Reformed theology’s later systematisation, however, transformed Calvin’s less closed *Classical Reformed* thinking of Calvin into the hardened *Scholastic Reformed* approach of theologians influenced by the Enlightenment, whose apologetic ironically reflected the rationalism they opposed. Later *Critical Reformed* theology accepted Biblical criticism but retained reformed attitudes to revelation. *Charismatic Reformed* thinking defends conservative attitudes to

<sup>147</sup> James Barr, *Fundamentalism* (London: SCM, 1977), pp. 208 f

<sup>148</sup> Victor Budgen, *The Charismatics and the Word of God* (Durham: Evangelical Press, 1989[1985]), p. 38

<sup>149</sup> Peter Jensen, *The God Who Speaks (Prophecy Today)* (Liss, Hants: L’Abri Fellowship, Audio Tape, X1099)

<sup>150</sup> See John Calvin, *op cit*, pp. 105 ff



Scripture while cautiously admitting the possibility of charismatic-style prophecy. These three developments from Classical Reformed theology can be described respectively as absolutisation, abandonment, and accommodation.

### Princeton

Scholastic Reformed theology's main expositor was Benjamin Warfield, at Princeton Seminary. His work defending Calvinism, and Biblical infallibility against modernist criticism is still the bedrock of evangelical Reformed theology. Regarding prophecy and spiritual gifts, he was a cessationist, believing that miracles have ceased.<sup>151</sup> The key is understanding the purpose they were given for. Warfield believed that God performs miracles to accredit His messengers, that is to authenticate revelation. Such revelation is not constant, but limited to certain historical periods. The last was the New Testament era, when the Apostles performed miracles to authenticate their message. That *Message* is now enscriptured, hence no further need of revelation exists, and any claim to new revelation is *a priori* false. The *Manner* by which God speaks today is Scripture.

Warfield argued that miracles ceased with the completion of the Canon,<sup>152</sup> not the establishment of the Church, since the latter would allow miracles where missionary breakthroughs are needed today, as with the gentile Pentecost.<sup>153</sup> Consequently, Warfield wrote that for fifty years of the post-apostolic Church, there were no reports of miracles.<sup>154</sup> Rather their introduction was due to the "heathen" influence of Catholic deformations.<sup>155</sup> The later development of Catholic mysticism was then attributed to Platonic influence. Rather than a supramundane realm, Protestantism related religious truth to propositional statements and historical facts.<sup>156</sup> To this theological foundationalism, was added Scottish common sense realism. This arose as a philosophical rebuttal of Hume's epistemological scepticism. But it imported naturalistic presuppositions into Reformed theology. Instead of Platonic Catholic mysticism, Protestant scholasticism relied upon Aristotelian epistemological foundations,

<sup>151</sup> See Benjamin B. Warfield, *Counterfeit Miracles* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1972[1918]), pp. 25 f

<sup>152</sup> *1 Corinthians* 13. 10

<sup>153</sup> *Acts* 10. 44 ff

<sup>154</sup> Warfield, *op cit*, pp. 7 ff

<sup>155</sup> *ibid*, p. 74

<sup>156</sup> See Benjamin B. Warfield, "Mysticism and Christianity," in Benjamin B. Warfield, *Studies in Theology* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1988[1931]), pp. 649 ff



transmitted through Locke and Edwards, of sense data and reason.<sup>157</sup> Paradoxically therefore, facing miraculous claims by Catholics, or Protestant enthusiasts (e.g. French prophets and Irvingites), Warfield imitated Hume's naturalistic polemic.<sup>158</sup>

### Post-War

In the United States this world-view formed the groundwork for the Dutch-led renaissance in Reformed theology after World War Two, typified by Louis Berkhof,<sup>159</sup> Cornelius Van Til,<sup>160</sup> and Geerhardus Vos.<sup>161</sup> They confirmed evangelicalism's attitude to prophecy - that it is a genus of special revelation<sup>162</sup> and limited to periods of new supernatural redemptive events requiring infallible interpretation. The only new revelation to be expected is at the eschaton, when new supernatural events occur.<sup>163</sup>

When charismatic renewal broke out within Presbyterianism in the 1970s, it met "stronger opposition" than in any other denomination.<sup>164</sup> America's litigious culture and Reformed confessionalism created intense battles for the tradition's soul. Debates about whether a charismatic pastor could hold office in a church whose confession professed the close of the revelational era,<sup>165</sup> became quasi-legal hearings against individuals at the Presbyterian Church of America's General Assembly.<sup>166</sup> As doctrine framed against historic enemies was applied to new ones, they divided over the true Calvinist inheritance, even questioning whether Calvin himself was consistently 'Calvinist'!<sup>167</sup> These reactions to charismatic and liberal threats to orthodoxy caused increasing fragmentation among American Presbyterians.<sup>168</sup> Nevertheless in the 1990s O. Palmer Robertson of the Orthodox

<sup>157</sup> See Morton T. Kelsey, "Courage, Unity and Theology," in Russell P. Spittler, *Perspectives on the New Pentecostalism* (Grand Rapids, MICH: Baker, 1976), pp. 235 f

<sup>158</sup> Warfield, *op cit*, p. 120

<sup>159</sup> See Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1958), pp. 36 ff

<sup>160</sup> See Cornelius Van Til, *An Introduction to Systematic Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1982[1974])

<sup>161</sup> See Vos, *op cit*

<sup>162</sup> See Van Til, *op cit*, pp. 125 ff

<sup>163</sup> See Vos, *op cit*, p. 304

<sup>164</sup> Peter Hocken, "The Charismatic Movement in the United States," *Pneuma* (Vol. 16, No. 2, Fall 1994), p. 201

<sup>165</sup> See Robert L. Reymond, *What About Continuing Revelations in the Presbyterian Church Today?* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1977), p. 2 f

<sup>166</sup> See Kenneth L. Gentry Jr., *The Charismatic Gift of Prophecy. A Reformed Response to Wayne Grudem* (Memphis: Footstool Publications, 1989[1986]), pp. 125 f

<sup>167</sup> *ibid*, pp. 109 ff

<sup>168</sup> See Hocken, *op cit*, p. 204



Presbyterian Church forcefully restated the position.<sup>169</sup>

Evangelical reaction to charismatic renewal in the Church of England was swift. J. I. Packer complemented his earlier defence of Biblical authority against liberal theology<sup>170</sup> with a similar defence against neo-Pentecostalism. Again, he stressed that the primary purpose of “special manifestations” such as prophecy was the attestation of God’s messengers.<sup>171</sup> Nevertheless, he welcomed the lay participation which renewal encouraged.<sup>172</sup> Although admitting that theoretically God could “revive” these gifts, Packer simultaneously downplayed their importance. Anglican evangelicalism’s *via media* was typified by John Stott. Largely responsible for evangelicalism’s resurgence in post-war Britain,<sup>173</sup> Stott allows the possibility of contemporary prophecy, providing it has a “lesser sense” than Scripture.<sup>174</sup> This “subsidiary” gift of prophecy, however, is limited to intuitive “insight” into Scripture and situations, not revelation of new information.<sup>175</sup>

According to Stott, the New Testament prophets and apostles laid the foundations for the Church, which today means the New Testament.<sup>176</sup> Any contemporary prophecy can only be Scriptural exposition, not any restoration of prophetic “office”.<sup>177</sup> Stott was, however, willing to compromise regarding the “adjective” if the “noun” was abandoned; that is preaching could be “prophetic” but no one had the authority of a “prophet”.<sup>178</sup> His relative openness was, like Packer’s, cautious regarding actual practice. Perhaps this was due to the conflict with his Curate Michael Harper, who became a leading Charismatic figure. Their split highlighted the issue of “authority” for evangelicals: is it Scripture or the Holy Spirit speaking today?<sup>179</sup>

<sup>169</sup> See O. Palmer Robertson, *The Final Word. A Biblical Response to the Case for Tongues and Prophecy Today* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1993)

<sup>170</sup> See J. I. Packer, *‘Fundamentalism’ and the Word of God* (London: IVF, 1958)

<sup>171</sup> See A. M. Stibbs & J. I. Packer, *The Spirit Within You. The Church’s Neglected Possession* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1967), pp. 30 ff

<sup>172</sup> *ibid*, p. 74

<sup>173</sup> See Adrian Hastings, *A History of English Christianity* (London: SCM, 1991), pp. 552 f

<sup>174</sup> John Stott, *Baptism and fullness. The Work of the Holy Spirit Today* (London: IVP, 1975[1964]), p. 101

<sup>175</sup> John Stott, “Gospel and Church: Lessons from first Thessalonians,” in David Porter (Ed.), *The Gospel, the Spirit, and the Church* (Bromley: STL/ Keswick Convention Council, 1978), p. 64

<sup>176</sup> See John Stott, *God’s New Society. The Message of Ephesians* (Leicester: IVP, 1979), pp. 106 ff

<sup>177</sup> *ibid*, pp. 161 ff

<sup>178</sup> John Stott, *The Message of Thessalonians* (Leicester: IVP, 1991), p. 128

<sup>179</sup> See Hastings, *op cit*, p. 557



## Confrontation

In contrast to Anglicanism's compromise strategy, reformed Baptist Walter Chantry writing for the Banner of Truth Trust, continued a more confrontational approach based on strict cessationist theology.<sup>180</sup> The fight continued into the 1980s, answering each new charismatic wave. As Gentry and Robertson in America responded to the new challenge of John Wimber's ministry and Wayne Grudem's theological apology for it, so did Victor Budgen in Britain.<sup>181</sup> Currently Peter Masters, successor to Spurgeon's pulpit at Metropolitan Tabernacle in London, is the main figure in this Reformed rear guard. However, although the Dispensationalist theologian John Walvoord of Dallas Seminary criticised continuing prophecy,<sup>182</sup> Masters distinguishes the Reformed and Dispensationalist views.<sup>183</sup> For Masters, God's operations are not limited by historical periodisation, but because God's purpose for sign-gifts has been achieved.

Within the Church of England however, a new grouping is defending the Reformed heritage from liberal doubt and charismatic fanaticism. The Proclamation Trust is less centrist than Stott's "mid-alternative",<sup>184</sup> and stems from Dick Lucas's ministry at St. Helen's Church in London. The Trust has become very influential, not only within evangelical Anglicanism but in the wider Reformed camp, chiefly through the Cornhill Training Course, presently headed by David Jackman (a Baptist Minister). The Trust also has an Australian connection, to the brothers Peter and Phillip Jensen. Because Australian evangelical Anglicanism has opposed renewal, British evangelical Anglicans have welcomed them, partly because of the perceived lack of "systematic theology" in British theological colleges.<sup>185</sup> Moving beyond reactivism, their journal, *The Briefing*, has presented an account of evangelical identity, to overcome the confusions caused as evangelicalism has diversified.<sup>186</sup>

<sup>180</sup> See Walter J. Chantry, *Signs of the Apostles. Observations on Pentecostalism Old and New* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1976[1973])

<sup>181</sup> See Budgen, *op cit*, pp. 264 ff

<sup>182</sup> See Walvoord, *op cit*, p. 167

<sup>183</sup> See Peter Masters, *The Healing Epidemic* (London: The Wakeman Trust, 1988), p. 113

<sup>184</sup> John Stott, *Interview* (12.4.97)

<sup>185</sup> Christopher Green, *Interview* (3.12.96)

<sup>186</sup> See Mark Thomson, "Saving the Heart," *The Briefing* (Issue 145), pp. 1 ff; & "Matter of the Heart," *The Briefing* (Issue 148), pp. 1 ff



Opposing contemporary prophecy, however, does not mean *ipso facto* denying any continuing revelation.<sup>187</sup> Prophecy is only one aspect of revelation. There is also “general revelation” including God’s revelation through nature<sup>188</sup> and God’s sovereignty over history directing it towards His purposes.<sup>189</sup> However, because Calvinists recognise that human understanding of general revelation and historical providence is limited by finitude and fallenness, special revelation is needed to interpret them.<sup>190</sup> Today with no new revelation to guarantee the interpretation of events, believers are subject to the risks of faithful obedience.

### Scripture

Even the reading of Scripture is provisional. The Reformed doctrine of “illumination” promises the Spirit’s help in interpretation,<sup>191</sup> but this does not imply revelation or prophecy. Although Calvin stated that Christians need the Spirit which inspired the prophets in order to understand Scripture,<sup>192</sup> there is no “new knowledge”.<sup>193</sup> Illumination refers only to the Holy Spirit’s help in rationally interpreting the text or understanding the Gospel. The inspiration of Biblical prophecy however, owes nothing to human ability, but is completely “supernatural”.<sup>194</sup> Palmer Robertson, for example, emphasises the “passivity” of Biblical prophets in the reception of revelation.<sup>195</sup> For him, this contradicts the contemporary notion of “fallible” prophecies which are mixtures of human and divine words and must be weighed. According to him, such “non-revelational” prophecy<sup>196</sup> would have two results: firstly, loss of assurance, because with no way to evaluate oracles it is hard to be sure one is being obedient;<sup>197</sup> secondly, loss of “freedom of conscience”, as the believer becomes dependent upon the unsubstantiated words of the prophet.<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> See Reymond, *op cit*, pp. 21 f

<sup>188</sup> See G. C. Berkouwer, *General Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MICH: Eerdmans, 1955)

<sup>189</sup> See O. Palmer Robertson, *op cit*, p. 54

<sup>190</sup> See Van Til, *op cit*, p. 111

<sup>191</sup> See Reymond, *op cit*, p. 21

<sup>192</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes*, Vol. 1, p. 90

<sup>193</sup> Edwin Palmer, *The Person and Ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Traditional Calvinistic Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1974[1958]), p. 60

<sup>194</sup> John F. Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit. A Comprehensive Study of the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MICH: Zondervan, 1991[1954]), p. 164

<sup>195</sup> Palmer Robertson, *op cit*, p. 15

<sup>196</sup> *ibid*, p. 9

<sup>197</sup> *ibid*, p. 19

<sup>198</sup> *ibid*, p. 93



Grudem claims that the existence of fallible prophecy is supported by Agabus's error in the *Acts of the Apostles*.<sup>199</sup> However, Agabus's reputation is defended by Budgen<sup>200</sup> and Robertson, who condemn Grudem's "precisionism" in interpreting Biblical prophecy.<sup>201</sup> Budgen adds that fulfilments can be "varied" and "surprising", and not necessarily literal.<sup>202</sup> Furthermore Grudem's implication that prophecy can come through "hunches" was rejected by Budgen as having no equivalent in either Old or New Testaments.<sup>203</sup> Such undependable prophesying would be more like Delphic oracles<sup>204</sup> and Gnostic mysticism<sup>205</sup> than genuine Christian experience. Moreover, it rendered the Holy Spirit impotent as He necessarily accommodated to human limitations.<sup>206</sup>

Another key evangelical doctrine is the "sufficiency of Scripture",<sup>207</sup> according to which any new message from God, even if not contradicting Scripture, adds something and detracts from the finality of revelation.<sup>208</sup> This position is based on the Reformational belief, expressed in the *Thirty-Nine Articles*, that Scripture contains "all things necessary to salvation".<sup>209</sup> In the 1970s this became fused with fundamentalism's "*Battle for the Bible*" against liberal criticism of Scriptural historicity.<sup>210</sup> Budgen sees charismatic experientialism as similar to theological "modernism" in looking for another "word" after Scripture,<sup>211</sup> and Chantry equates it with "existentialism".<sup>212</sup> Peter Masters describes it as a third challenge to Biblical authority, for where Roman Catholicism elevated tradition, and liberal theology human reason, charismatics submit Scripture to "sensationalism", that is "emotional (or bodily) experience".<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> See Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1988) pp. 96 ff; See *Acts 21.10 ff*

<sup>200</sup> See Budgen, *op cit*, p. 266

<sup>201</sup> Robertson, *op cit*, p. 114

<sup>202</sup> Budgen, *op cit*, p. 272

<sup>203</sup> *ibid*, p. 26

<sup>204</sup> *ibid*, pp. 18, 278

<sup>205</sup> *ibid*, p. 244

<sup>206</sup> *ibid*, pp. 32 f

<sup>207</sup> See Peter Adam, "The preacher and the sufficient word," in Christopher Green & David Jackman, *When God's voice is heard. Essays on preaching presented to Dick Lucas* (Leicester: IVP, 1995), pp. 27 ff

<sup>208</sup> See Chantry, *op cit*, pp. 26 f

<sup>209</sup> "Articles of Religion," in *The Book of Common Prayer* (London: William Clowes & Sons., Ltd.), p. 276

<sup>210</sup> See Harold Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MICH: Zondervan, 1976), quoted in John MacArthur, *The Charismatics. A Doctrinal Perspective* (London: The Lamp Press, 1979[1978]), p. 70

<sup>211</sup> Budgen, *op cit*, p. 252

<sup>212</sup> Chantry, *op cit*, p. 108

<sup>213</sup> Peter Masters, "Four Major Foes Challenging the Sole Authority of the Bible," *Sword & Trowel* (No. 3, 1996), pp. 26 f



## Debate

However, some Reformed theologians associated with *Foundations*, the Journal of the British Evangelical Council, are in dialogue with charismatics. Nick Needham advises that, while Scripture is “sufficient”, it is so only for the “the purposes for which God intends it”<sup>214</sup> - that is to show the way to salvation. In other words, for Christopher Bennett, there remain contemporary situations, not covered by Scripture, where we need Divine guidance and personal revelation.<sup>215</sup> In reaction against a “biblicism” which excludes the Spirit, Iain Campbell therefore stresses the Holy Spirit’s role in guidance, through affecting our common sense and “feelings”.<sup>216</sup>

But for conservative evangelicals, it is precisely such “means and methods” which God no longer uses to guide His people, now the Canon is completed.<sup>217</sup> To want more is “retrogression”.<sup>218</sup> Because the Spirit guide us only through Scripture,<sup>219</sup> guidance is “deductive”,<sup>220</sup> deriving “principles” for conduct from rational study of the Bible.<sup>221</sup> Calvinism does suggest that divine providence provides guidance,<sup>222</sup> but this is for assurance and comfort rather than usefulness. Edwin Palmer writes that providence’s direction is visible only with hindsight,<sup>223</sup> and although providential promptings occur, our perception of them is not reliable.<sup>224</sup> Hence, individual or congregational decision-making has to analyse relevant factors like anyone else, while praying for God to guide one’s reason.<sup>225</sup> This view is based upon a positive valuation of the mind and rationality. If God revealed Himself propositionally in words, then rational understanding of those words is important. Therefore evangelicals, such as John Stott, have emphasised the role of the mind.<sup>226</sup> Stott thinks

<sup>214</sup> Nick Needham, “Richard Baxter on present-day revelations of God’s will,” *Foundations. A Journal of Evangelical Theology* (No. 39, Autumn 1997), p. 27

<sup>215</sup> Christopher Bennett, “The Spirit in the Word - and beyond?” *Foundations* (No. 39, Autumn 1997), p. 14

<sup>216</sup> Iain Campbell, “Word and Spirit - a theological orientation,” *Foundations* (No. 39, Autumn 1997), pp. 6 f

<sup>217</sup> See Reymond, *op cit*, p. 22

<sup>218</sup> Ronald E. Baxter, *Gifts of the Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MICH: Kregel, 1983), p. 86

<sup>219</sup> See Phillip D. Jensen & Tony Payne, *Guidance and the Word of God* (Sydney/London/Capetown: Matthias Media, 1997), p. 71

<sup>220</sup> Walvoord, *op cit*, p. 221

<sup>221</sup> Peter Masters, *Interview* (24.2.97)

<sup>222</sup> See Peter Jensen, *The God Who Speaks*

<sup>223</sup> Palmer, *op cit*, pp. 121 f

<sup>224</sup> *ibid*, p. 127

<sup>225</sup> *ibid*, p. 130

<sup>226</sup> See John R. W. Stott, *Your Mind Matters. The place of the mind in the Christian life* (London: IVP, 1972)

charismatics rescued Christianity's emotional side from dry intellectualism, but his solution is a "balanced" approach between the extremes.<sup>227</sup>

Building on Warfield's critique of Platonising tendencies, Masters however criticises contemporary "mysticism", which aims at "communion with God" apart from the Word.<sup>228</sup> Palmer agrees there is no place for passively waiting on God in silence for a "word" when we have the Bible before us.<sup>229</sup> Francis Schaeffer, founder of L'Abri Fellowship, also criticised Platonic mystical tendencies in neo-Pentecostalism "new super-spirituality".<sup>230</sup> Instead of other-worldly spiritual experience, "true spirituality" for Schaeffer rested upon Christ's finished work, and its appropriation through our "thought life".<sup>231</sup> Without this, faith became an irrational mystical "leap of faith".<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> See John R. W. Stott, *Balanced Christianity. A Call to Avoid Unnecessary Polarisation* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1975)

<sup>228</sup> Peter Masters, "The Precise Nature of Communion with God," *Sword & Trowel* (No. 3, 1996), pp. 12 ff

<sup>229</sup> See Palmer, *op cit*, p. 113

<sup>230</sup> See Francis A. Schaeffer, *The New Super-Spirituality* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1973)

<sup>231</sup> See Francis Schaeffer, *True Spirituality* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1972)

<sup>232</sup> See Francis Schaeffer, "The God Who Is There," in *Trilogy* (Leicester: IVP, 1990), pp. 57 ff



## 2. ACCOMMODATING CHARISMATA

### Spiritual Gifts

Conservative-Protestants do not consider all spiritual gifts to have ceased. Indeed Walvoord criticised their non-use.<sup>233</sup> The emphasis, however, was as with Stott on the “non-miraculous” gifts - serving, helping, teaching.<sup>234</sup> Nevertheless, the need for lay involvement and Church-growth fostered an interest in developing spiritual gifts among Church-members. Spurred on by charismatic Church-growth writers such as Peter Wagner<sup>235</sup> Bruce Black, an American Presbyterian, produced a book on discovering one’s spiritual gifts.<sup>236</sup> Naturally, Black excised references to “sign-gifts” such as prophecy.<sup>237</sup> Any contemporary equivalent of prophecy is limited to the work of the “pastor-teacher”,<sup>238</sup> while the word of knowledge is seen as a revelatory gift needed by the Scripture-less early Church.<sup>239</sup> Another interpretation of this gift, mentioned only once in Scripture, is that it is the preaching of knowledge about Christ.<sup>240</sup> Charismatics however, understand it as supernatural knowledge, of information they could not know naturally, frequently regarding people’s private lives.<sup>241</sup> Naturally, Reformed critics condemn the errors, triviality, and manipulation of this practice.<sup>242</sup>

Nevertheless, Reformed Christians believing in Divine sovereignty, are reluctant to limit God’s power. He is free to do anything He pleases, including perform miracles.<sup>243</sup> This is an significant concession, since charismatics like Presbyterian Jack Deere quote the prophetic experiences of the Scottish reformers as an apologetic for contemporary prophecy.<sup>244</sup> Masters, however, stresses this was the sovereign working of God, not a human possession. Master’s Hyper-Calvinism therefore has no theological categories to explain or

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<sup>233</sup> See Walvoord, *op cit*, p. 163

<sup>234</sup> John Stott, *Baptism and Fullness*, p. 91

<sup>235</sup> See C. Peter Wagner, *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow* (Venture, CA: Regal Books, 1979)

<sup>236</sup> Bruce W. Black, *The Spiritual Gifts Handbook. The Complete Guide to Discovering and Using Your Spiritual Gifts* (Neptune, NJ: Loiseaux, 1995)

<sup>237</sup> *ibid*, pp. 87 ff

<sup>238</sup> *ibid*, pp. 33 ff

<sup>239</sup> *ibid*, p. 88

<sup>240</sup> See David Short, “What is a ‘Word of Knowledge’?” *The Briefing* (No. 66, 9 April 1991), pp. 2 ff

<sup>241</sup> See Bill Subritsky, *Receiving the Gifts of the Holy Spirit* (Chichester: Sovereign World, 1985), pp. 39 ff

<sup>242</sup> (No Author named), “Words of Knowledge: Current Trends,” *The Briefing* (No. 80), pp. 8 ff

<sup>243</sup> Peter Masters, *Interview*

<sup>244</sup> See Jack Deere, *Surprised by the Voice of God* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1996), pp. 69 ff



understand such phenomena, except a blanket reference to providence. He dismisses examples as “statistically irrelevant”,<sup>245</sup> or uses psychic terms like “clairvoyance” to even name them.<sup>246</sup> Peter Jensen, admits (unlike Masters) that cessationism has no Biblical support. He therefore accepts that comments from lay people might fall into the category of “prophecy,” but coyly refuses to call it such.<sup>247</sup>

### **Rapprochement**

Wayne Grudem’s work has prompted a rethink among evangelicals. He goes beyond repeating the Charismatic-Pentecostal view that the passing away of prophecy in 1 Corinthians 13 refers to the parousia rather than the Canon.<sup>248</sup> He asserts that it is the New Testament Apostles not the Prophets who wrote the very words of God.<sup>249</sup> Apostles therefore replace Old Testament prophets in delivering authoritative revelation, while New Testament prophecy was fallible human reporting of what the Holy Spirit brought to mind and therefore not equal in authority to Scriptural apostolic teaching.<sup>250</sup> In the United States, Don Carson has followed Grudem in allowing spontaneous oracular revelations today.<sup>251</sup> Carson feels that often charismatic excesses have made evangelicals relegate the Spirit to a merely “credal item,” rather than a matter of experience.<sup>252</sup> However, he thinks that Grudem has overdrawn the distinction between Old Testament and New Testament prophets. Carson still distinguishes between authoritative and non-authoritative prophecy, but thinks the basis lies in the difference between Old Testament writing and non-writing prophets.<sup>253</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> Peter Masters & John C. Whitcomb, *The Charismatic Phenomenon* (London: The Wakeman Trust, 1982), p. 9

<sup>246</sup> Masters, *Interview*

<sup>247</sup> See Peter Jensen & Peter O’Brien, “1 and 2 Peter on Prophecy,” *The Briefing* (No. 162/3), p. 7

<sup>248</sup> Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today*, pp. 235 ff

<sup>249</sup> *ibid*, pp. 25 ff

<sup>250</sup> *ibid*, pp. 67 ff

<sup>251</sup> See Don A. Carson, *Showing the Spirit. A Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12 - 14* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1995[1987]), pp. 93 ff

<sup>252</sup> Don A. Carson, *The Gagging of God. Christianity Confronts Pluralism* (Leicester: Apollos, 1996), p. 567 f

<sup>253</sup> *ibid*, p. 98



In the United Kingdom, Herbert Carson<sup>254</sup> and Roy Clements, former Pastor of Eden Baptist Church in Cambridge,<sup>255</sup> were influenced by Grudem. Also, during the 1980s a series of conferences entitled “Life in the Spirit” tried to bring Reformed Christians together with moderate charismatics.<sup>256</sup> This reconciling dynamic may underlie the relationship between R. T. Kendall of Westminster Chapel, London, and the charismatic prophet-seer, Paul Cain.<sup>257</sup> Kendall’s American revivalist roots and his own visionary experience before he entered the ministry,<sup>258</sup> suggest this new accord may be an awakening of “latent charisma.”<sup>259</sup>

Clements, however, believed the 1980s rapprochement was vitiated by the Toronto blessing, which confirmed evangelical misgivings about charismatics.<sup>260</sup> Nevertheless, he still advocated reconciliation. Speaking at the 1996 National Assembly of Evangelicals, he commended the contributions of each camp: the charismatic emphasis on God’s “supernatural power” and the Reformed stress on doctrine.<sup>261</sup> Clements, however, admitted that his own congregation’s conservative tradition made prophecy rare in his Church. In practice he sought openings through informal lay contributions and “insights”.<sup>262</sup> This recalls Grudem’s view that non-charismatics may have the gift of prophecy while not using the term.<sup>263</sup> If prophecy is reporting what God brings to mind, then clearly it relates to the experience of many evangelicals. Frequently however, like Ranald Macaulay (of Schaeffer’s L’Abri Fellowship), they prefer to let these “unusual means... remain unusual”.<sup>264</sup>

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<sup>254</sup> See Herbert Carson, *Spiritual Gifts for Today? Evangelical and Charismatic Come Together* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1987)

<sup>255</sup> See Roy Clements, *Word and Spirit. The Bible and the gift of prophecy today* (Leicester: UCCF Booklets, 1986)

<sup>256</sup> Kenneth Brownell, *Interview* (31.3.98)

<sup>257</sup> I attended the *Word And Spirit Conferences* (Wembley, October 1992 & Westminster Chapel, February 1996), which they spoke at.

<sup>258</sup> R. T. Kendall, *Interview* (26.9.96)

<sup>259</sup> See Michael Hill, *op cit*, p. 172

<sup>260</sup> Roy Clements, *Interview* (17.4.97)

<sup>261</sup> Roy Clements, “Power Play,” *Evangelicals Now* (February 1997), p. 17

<sup>262</sup> Clements, *Interview*

<sup>263</sup> Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today*, p. 262

<sup>264</sup> Ranald Macaulay, *Interview* (28.5.96)



## Defensiveness

Many conservative publications on charismatic issues are damage-limitation exercises. For example Donald Bridge's books responded to each new threat, from initial charismatic renewal in the early 1970s<sup>265</sup> to the rise of "*Power Evangelism*" in the 1980s.<sup>266</sup> While accepting the extraordinary, they also set strict limits to it. Published by Inter-Varsity Press, these books address the particular situation of University Christian Unions. Aware of the dangers of spiritual extremism in a youth movement, Bridge erects a structure of "safeguards" governing "informal prophecy".<sup>267</sup> The attitude however, also manifests itself within evangelical Churches, like All Souls, London - Stott's base. There Michael Baughen wrote a paper equating prophecy with open discussion in Bible study groups.<sup>268</sup> Fears of papal-like authoritarianism or spiritual anarchy make evangelicals reluctant to use the word "prophecy" even when the intellectual case is conceded.

Evangelicalism's central concern is the maintenance of broad unity on the basis of sound doctrine.<sup>269</sup> This has grown fragile as evangelicalism, especially within the Anglican Church, has become larger and less marginal. The result has been greater diversity and a concomitant need to define their identity. While the Proclamation Trust have sought an exclusivist approach to this, others like the Evangelical Alliance and Spring Harvest adopt an inclusivist conception of evangelical unity. This exemplifies what David Wells calls the transition from "confessional" to "transconfessional" evangelicalism.<sup>270</sup> Whilst the former stressed doctrine as the basis of unity, the latter's organisational pragmatism is more able to "accommodate the charismatic mentality".<sup>271</sup>

<sup>265</sup> See Donald Bridge & David Phypers, *Spiritual Gifts and the Church* (London: IVP, 1973)

<sup>266</sup> See Donald Bridge, *Signs and Wonders Today* (Leicester: IVP, 1985)

<sup>267</sup> Bridge & Phypers, *op cit*, pp. 62 ff

<sup>268</sup> See Michael Baughen, *Prophets and Prophecy* (London: All Souls Papers, 1981)

<sup>269</sup> See Michael Griffiths, "Handling Differences. Part 1," *Harvester* (Vol. LXIV, No. 2, February 1985), pp. 4 ff; & "Part 2" (Vol. LXIV, No. 3, March 1985), pp. 4 ff

<sup>270</sup> David Wells, "On Being Evangelical: Some Theological Differences and Similarities," in Mark A. Noll, David W. Bebbington & George A. Rawlyk, *Evangelicalism. Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, The British Isles, and Beyond 1700 - 1990* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 391 ff

<sup>271</sup> *ibid*, p. 403



## Perception and Preaching

Roy Clements added two further dimensions to Conservative-Protestant prophecy: firstly, the “statesman”;<sup>272</sup> secondly, preaching as prophecy.<sup>273</sup> The prophetic “statesman” addresses social and cultural issues, although carefully speaking from Scripture, and not sanctifying one’s political prejudices. Clements himself tried to fulfil this role through his collaboration with Michael Schluter in the Cambridge-based Jubilee Centre. This is a think-tank presenting a Christian perspective on social issues, such as Sunday trading<sup>274</sup> and family policy.<sup>275</sup> Clements’ metaphorical use of the word “prophet” to describe someone bringing God’s Word to contemporary culture, is common among evangelicals. But it is usually used of others rather than oneself, for example in descriptions of Francis Schaeffer<sup>276</sup> and David Wells.<sup>277</sup> Stott also suggests that those with insights into contemporary events<sup>278</sup> and politics<sup>279</sup> could be prophetic. But he again excludes new revelation, and his own social commentary constitutes ethical reflection rather than prophecy.<sup>280</sup> However Protestant political prophesying can be termed ‘inspired’ rather than ‘revelatory.’ For example, Os Guinness felt that his book “*The American Hour*” was “given” to him by God directly,<sup>281</sup> although he claims not to be a prophet and rejects the identification of prophets with “pundits”.<sup>282</sup>

Clements did not consider all preaching prophetic, since prophecy implies spontaneity.<sup>283</sup> Preaching is therefore prophetic, according to Clements, when it contains appropriate “application” and “insights”, which distinguish it from “didache”.<sup>284</sup> This rescues preaching from the “rationalism” of the technical expositor.<sup>285</sup> Clements differed, however,

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<sup>272</sup> Clements, *Interview*

<sup>273</sup> See Roy Clements, “The Preacher as Prophet. Authority and application,” in Green & Jackman, *op cit*, pp. 97 ff

<sup>274</sup> See Christopher Townsend & Michael Schluter, *Why Keep Sunday Special. Jubilee Centre Paper No. 5* (Cambridge: Jubilee Centre Publications Ltd., 1985)

<sup>275</sup> See Michael Schluter & Roy Clements, *Reactivating the Extended Family: From Biblical Norms to Public Policy in Britain. Jubilee Centre Paper No. 1* (Cambridge: Jubilee Centre Publications Ltd., 1986)

<sup>276</sup> See J. I. Packer, “Foreward: The Man and His Vision,” in Francis A. Schaeffer, *Trilogy*, p. xi

<sup>277</sup> See Peter Lewis, Dust jacket of David F. Wells, *God in the Wasteland. The Reality of Truth in a World of Fading Dreams* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans/Leicester: IVP, 1994)

<sup>278</sup> See Stott, “Gospel and Church,” p. 63

<sup>279</sup> See Stott, *Baptism and Fullness*, p. 101

<sup>280</sup> John Stott, *Issues Facing Christians Today* (Basingstoke: Marshall Morgan & Scott, 1984)

<sup>281</sup> Os Guinness, *Interview* (5.8.97)

<sup>282</sup> Os Guinness, *The American Hour* (New York: The Free Press, 1993), p. 282

<sup>283</sup> Clements, *Word and Spirit*, p. 25

<sup>284</sup> Clements, *Interview*

<sup>285</sup> Clements, *Word and Spirit*, p. 27



from strict Reformed views. Admittedly, early Puritans, such as William Perkins,<sup>286</sup> referred to preaching as “prophesying”, and held “conferences” in order to hear a variety of “prophesyings”.<sup>287</sup> With no new revelation, however, Masters<sup>288</sup> and Stott<sup>289</sup> prefer not to describe expository preaching as prophecy, although evangelicals retain an active role for the Holy Spirit in preaching, not only in the inspiration of Scripture but its illumination, and the preacher’s inspiration.<sup>290</sup>

Occasionally the word “prophecy” is used, cautiously, to refer to sermons or Bible study, as by the American Missionary Alliance Pastor A. W. Tozer. But it still refers to the ordered proclamation of God’s Word,<sup>291</sup> and is defined as the role specifically of the Church minister.<sup>292</sup> Likewise, Jim Packer defines contemporary prophecy as the “application” of revelation, not its “augmentation”.<sup>293</sup> Spontaneous insights he allows, but relates them to the ministry of encouragement rather than prophecy.<sup>294</sup> Besides this classically *Reformed* tradition however, there is another approach within Protestantism to prophecy, which Clements expressed. This is the *Revivalist* tradition, of the Celtic fringes and the Brethren. Its origin among Radical Reformation spiritualists and the Quakers is highlighted by Peter Masters.<sup>295</sup> Later influences include Pietism and Methodism. Together they form a popular, conservative anti-Enlightenment equivalent of Schleiermacher’s location of faith in feeling rather than reason.<sup>296</sup>

<sup>286</sup> See William Perkins, *The Art of Prophesying* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1996[1592])

<sup>287</sup> See Kirsty Birkett, “Prophesying. Puritanism among the people,” *The Briefing* (No. 138), pp. 2 ff

<sup>288</sup> Masters & Whitcomb, *op cit*, pp. 100 f

<sup>289</sup> See John Stott, *I Believe in Preaching* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1982), p. 113

<sup>290</sup> See John Woodhouse, “The Preacher and the living Word. Preaching and the Holy Spirit,” in Green & Jackman, *op cit*, pp. 43 f

<sup>291</sup> See A. W. Tozer, *Tragedy in the Church: The Missing Gifts* (Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications Inc., 1978), p. 25

<sup>292</sup> See A. W. Tozer, *Of God and Men* (Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, 1960), pp. 20 ff

<sup>293</sup> J. I. Packer, *Keep In Step With The Spirit* (Leicester: IVP, 1984), p. 215

<sup>294</sup> *ibid*, p. 217

<sup>295</sup> See Masters & Whitcomb, *op cit*, pp. 42 f, 99

<sup>296</sup> See Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion. Speeches to its cultured despisers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 102



## Protestant Preaching

In Aberdeen, William Still allowed that some might prophesy “ecstatically” today,” but felt that the primary vehicle for prophecy is the “exposition of the Scriptures.”<sup>297</sup> Further south, Martin Lloyd Jones of Westminster Chapel, proclaimed that prophetic preaching needed the “unction” or anointing of the Holy Spirit.<sup>298</sup> This again implied a view of prophecy not as “revelation” but “inspiration”,<sup>299</sup> marked by relevant application and empowerment.<sup>300</sup> Such anointing made the difference between “prophetic preaching”, and “priestly preaching” which was technically correct but spiritually dry.<sup>301</sup>

Nevertheless, this unction is still only a quickening of what the preacher prepared. The Brethren tradition, however, stressed spontaneity. Gathered around the Lord’s Table, a mystical sense allows for extempore preaching.<sup>302</sup> Yet this owes more to Holiness and Keswick emphases on prophecy as “testifying” rather than Pentecostal prophesying.<sup>303</sup> Consequently, although T. Austin-Sparks, an independent Baptist minister, was anti-Pentecostal, his concept of prophetic ministry still required “detailed knowledge of God’s purposes”<sup>304</sup> available only through personal “revelation”.<sup>305</sup> The “vision” needed for these “end-times” could come only from direct communication from God.<sup>306</sup> Although again, this involved supernatural illumination of Scripture not new knowledge. Sparks influenced the Chinese Christian leader Watchman Nee,<sup>307</sup> and his conception of prophetic ministry as the proclamation of the Word of God.<sup>308</sup> This required revelation or “light” in the prophet,<sup>309</sup> since the “Word” was not mere speech but drew on the person of the

<sup>297</sup> William Still, “Apostles and Prophets,” in Nigel M. de S. Cameron & Sinclair B. Ferguson (Eds.), *Collected Writings of William Still. Vol. 1: Theological Studies* (Edinburgh: Rutherford House Books, 1990), p. 184

<sup>298</sup> Martin Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1971), pp. 305 f

<sup>299</sup> Tony Sargent, *The Sacred Anointing. The Preaching of Dr. Martin Lloyd Jones* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1994), p. 86

<sup>300</sup> *ibid*, p. 84

<sup>301</sup> *ibid*, p. 294

<sup>302</sup> Ian Randall, *Interview* (3.3.97)

<sup>303</sup> See Dayton, *op cit*, p. 93

<sup>304</sup> T. Austin-Sparks, *Prophetic Ministry* (Bethesda, MD: Testimony Book Ministry, 1989), pp. 13 ff

<sup>305</sup> *ibid*, pp. 16 ff

<sup>306</sup> T. Austin-Sparks, *The Work of God at the End-Time* (Pelham, AL: Testimony Book Ministry, n.d.), pp. 14 ff

<sup>307</sup> See Angus Kinnear, *Against the Tide. The Story of Watchman Nee* (Eastbourne: Victory Press, 1973), p. 111

<sup>308</sup> See Watchman Nee, *What shall this man do?* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1992[1961]), p. 114

<sup>309</sup> Watchman Nee, *The Ministry of God’s Word* (New York: Christian Fellowship Publishers Inc., 1971), pp. 143 ff



prophet himself and what God had wrought within his life.<sup>310</sup> Nee also had a concept of “soul power”, a natural ability which gave insights into people’s personal situations.<sup>311</sup> This ability was forbidden, however, since human fallenness made it usable for evil purposes and other religions such as Buddhism. For both men therefore, the purpose of prophetic ministry was solely to lead the individual to the experience of the Cross, the death of the self-life and the greater realisation of the life of Christ within.

*Critical Reformed* theology also saw prophecy as preaching. Georg Fohrer, for example, although he conceives of the prophets as radical innovators, still presents them as preachers.<sup>312</sup> Gerhard Von Rad, whom Fohrer criticises, does the same. For if, as Von Rad maintains, prophets interpret tradition then they are expositors of tradition,<sup>313</sup> fulfilling the role of the Lutheran pastor.<sup>314</sup> This shared Reformation heritage includes Karl Barth and neo-orthodoxy, despite evangelical criticisms of Barth for separating God’s Word from Scripture<sup>315</sup> and evangelical dismissals of neo-orthodoxy and renewal as similar assaults on the Bible.<sup>316</sup>

Barth shared Protestantism’s emphasis on proclamation. He saw preaching, the “exposition” of Scripture,<sup>317</sup> as the contemporary equivalent of prophecy.<sup>318</sup> Even where he advocates a prophetic stance by the Church in politics, he means its preaching ministry.<sup>319</sup> Preaching remains the “recollection of past revelation”<sup>320</sup> not new prophetic experience.<sup>321</sup> Still, for Barth Scripture has to “become” the Word of God as we receive it in faith,<sup>322</sup> for which the Holy Spirit is needed<sup>323</sup> as the “subjective aspect” of revelation.<sup>324</sup> Such language is reminiscent of Lloyd Jones’s talk of “unction.” However although systematic theologian

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<sup>310</sup> *ibid*, p. 171

<sup>311</sup> See Watchman Nee, *The Latent Power of the Soul* (New York: Christian Literature Publishers Inc., 1972)

<sup>312</sup> See Fohrer, “Remarks on Modern Interpretation of the Prophets,” p. 318

<sup>313</sup> See Von Rad, *The Message of the Prophets*, p. 11

<sup>314</sup> See Petersen, *The Roles of Israel’s Prophets*, pp. 11 ff

<sup>315</sup> See Walvoord, *op cit*, p. 258

<sup>316</sup> See Chantry, *op cit*, pp. 108 f

<sup>317</sup> See Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics I.1* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975[1936]), p. 56

<sup>318</sup> *ibid*, p. 104

<sup>319</sup> Karl Barth, “The Christian Community and the Civil Community,” in *Against the Stream. Shorter Post-War Writings 1946 - 52* (London: SCM, 1954), p. 47

<sup>320</sup> *ibid*, p. 99

<sup>321</sup> *ibid*, p. 55

<sup>322</sup> *ibid*, p. 143

<sup>323</sup> *ibid*, p. 449 ff

<sup>324</sup> Karl Barth, *The Holy Ghost and the Christian Life* (London: Frederick Muller Ltd., 1938), p. 19



Rodman Williams quoted Barth's positive comments concerning "extraordinary capacities", Barth had little understanding of charismata, relegating them to the paranormal.<sup>325</sup> More recently Colin Gunton's theology of revelation has reiterated the Reformed position, arguing that there is only the exposition of past revelation.<sup>326</sup> Although many desire prophetic "revelatory immediacy" today,<sup>327</sup> Gunton insists there is no direct access to God, only the mediation of Scripture and creed.

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<sup>325</sup> Rodman Williams, *The Era of the Spirit* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1971), p. 73

<sup>326</sup> See Colin E. Gunton, *A Brief Theology of Revelation. The 1993 Warfield Lectures* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1995), p. 110

<sup>327</sup> *ibid*, p. 4



### 3. CONTEXTUALISING CONSERVATISM

#### Social Change

In part the conflict over prophecy concerns authority. For evangelicals, the defence of Scriptural authority is important, as they seek to establish their faith in an age of critique.<sup>328</sup> Prophecy, however, also threatens institutional authority. As we have seen, Reformed observers defend the individual Christian's freedom against authoritarian prophecy. Roy Clements, however, exposed the "politics of power" within the Reformed tradition, alleging that conservatives reacted defensively to the threat posed by charismatic claims to their own authority positions.<sup>329</sup> Herbert Carson specifically attributes much evangelical hostility to a defence of tradition more akin to Roman Catholic attitudes.<sup>330</sup> Indeed the hunger for direct spiritual experience, in healing and prophecy, may be a resurgence of pre-Reformation practices which the Radical Reformation also promoted.<sup>331</sup> Another influence is the contemporary democratisation of spirituality.<sup>332</sup> The freedom to speak according to the "prophetic spirit" threatens the authority of educated, literate "trained clergy"<sup>333</sup> as the sole intermediaries between God and congregation. When education belonged to the few, the few might presume to speak for God. But with expanding education, the many demand to share their own spiritual observations, even without formal training. Indeed those claiming special authority are particularly suspect, as people appeal to direct experience.<sup>334</sup>

The conflict also reflects changes within capitalism. The disciplined asceticism of Protestantism's this-worldly work ethic helped create the conditions for capital accumulation.<sup>335</sup> Ecclesiastically, this bourgeois religion produced "Apollonian" forms of worship which were restrained, decorous and closed to spontaneous prophetic explosions.<sup>336</sup> Prophetic ecstasy, in Tillich's words, was replaced by predictable and controllable "doctrinal and moral structure."<sup>337</sup> For practical purposes Deism reigned; God was

<sup>328</sup> See Martin Lloyd-Jones, *Authority* (London: IVF, 1958)

<sup>329</sup> Clements, "Power Play," p. 17

<sup>330</sup> Herbert Carson, *op cit*, p. 14

<sup>331</sup> See Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic. Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century England* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971), p. 148

<sup>332</sup> See Steve Bruce, *Religion in Modern Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 118

<sup>333</sup> Palmer Robertson, *op cit*, pp. 94 f

<sup>334</sup> See Bruce, *op cit*, p. 128

<sup>335</sup> See Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1976[1930])

<sup>336</sup> See Roberts, *op cit*, p. 228

<sup>337</sup> Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology Vol. III*, p. 117



uninvolved with humanity. He had spoken once, but no longer. Truth was discovered by inductively applying the principles of Scripture or science. The model of prophecy as exposition is essentially modernist, characterising not only Conservative-Protestantism but also the Cultural-Political prophetic model. As capitalism's invisible hand and Calvinism's silent God coalesced, the individual's position before an almighty predestining God was translated into the submission of a masochistic authoritarian personality.<sup>338</sup> Protestant spirituality expressed the loneliness of a stark, desacralised universe<sup>339</sup> for bourgeois individuals separated by the market.<sup>340</sup> This "literal disaffirmation" of prophecy and symbol provoked reactions, however.<sup>341</sup> Pietism among the middle classes, and Pentecostalism among the poor, rebelled against the psychic consequences of spiritual disenchantment, supplying Someone to speak to them from beyond the void.

### **Economic change**

After World War II, there was resurgence in Christianity, especially evangelicalism, on both sides of the Atlantic.<sup>342</sup> Evangelicalism's ascetical discipline, work ethic, and stress on reason were well-suited to conditions of economic recovery.<sup>343</sup> Liberal Protestantism, however, also contributed. Although liberals denied the supernatural and evangelicals affirmed it, in practice the latter restricted it to doctrinal statements and the historical past. Economically, both provided submissive workers whose horizons were no higher than the pay-cheque. With the transcendental voice effectively secularised, there was no alternative to pragmatic tinkering with the details of economic management.<sup>344</sup> This pseudo-Weberian phenomenon was only temporary and disappeared as prosperity grew. While early and mature capitalism favoured ascetical ethics, late or advanced capitalism requires hedonistic ethics favouring consumption.<sup>345</sup>

<sup>338</sup> See Erich Fromm, *Escape From Freedom* (New York: Avon Books, 1969[1941]), pp. 163 ff

<sup>339</sup> *ibid*, p. 129

<sup>340</sup> See Paul Tillich, *A History of Christian Thought* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1972), pp. 341 ff

<sup>341</sup> David M. Wulff, *Psychology of Religion. Classic and Contemporary* (New York: John Wiley & sons., 1997). p. 636

<sup>342</sup> See Bruce, *op cit*, p. 30

<sup>343</sup> See Hastings, *A History of English Christianity*, pp. 515 f

<sup>344</sup> See Max Horkheimer, *Eclipse of Reason* (New York: Continuum, 1974[1947]), pp. 16 f

<sup>345</sup> See Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy* (New York: Anchor Books, 1969), pp. 145 f



Moreover, religion has shared this shift from production to consumption,<sup>346</sup> with evangelicals embracing marketing techniques<sup>347</sup> and charismatics emphasising experience and feelings.<sup>348</sup> Os Guinness has criticised evangelicalism's accommodation to market values,<sup>349</sup> and David Wells attacks charismatics' tendency to regard culture pragmatically, rather than as a potential threat to faith.<sup>350</sup> Their cultural critique, however, has not led conservatives to question capitalism as the source of this relativising solvent.<sup>351</sup> Instead the attack is aimed at "modernity"; although the irony is not lost that Protestantism, especially evangelicalism, has helped produce the modernity which is strangling it.<sup>352</sup>

Paradoxically conservative evangelicalism combines "system-supportive" and "oppositional" elements in relation to society.<sup>353</sup> For example, although it represents a protest against modernity, it also expresses a process of "cognitive bargaining" with it.<sup>354</sup> Socially, whilst some exemplify "status politics",<sup>355</sup> others are elite beneficiaries. There are both the high evangelical *patricians* of the Presbyterian and Anglican-Episcopalian establishments, and the low fundamentalist *plebeians* of the Baptists and independent evangelical Churches. Representing respectively the dominant and retrenching classes, they share similar systemic values and aspirations. The latter are more militant, however, because they are threatened by the pace of technological and societal change.<sup>356</sup> Consequently, they experience conflict with the ascending "class" of white collar workers and the knowledge elite.<sup>357</sup> More precisely the conflict reflects tension between different petty bourgeois

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<sup>346</sup> See Davie, *op cit*, p. 21

<sup>347</sup> See Berger, *op cit*, p. 138

<sup>348</sup> See James Davison Hunter, "Conservative Protestantism," in Phillip E. Hammond (Ed.), *The Sacred in a Secular Age. Toward Revision in the Scientific Study of Religion* (Berkeley & Los Angeles, CA/ London: University of California Press, 1985), p. 160

<sup>349</sup> See Os Guinness, "Sounding Out the Idols of Church Growth," in Os Guinness & John Seel (Eds.), *No God But God. Breaking with the Idols of Our Age* (Chicago: Moody, 1992), pp. 151

<sup>350</sup> David Wells, "On Being Evangelical," p. 403

<sup>351</sup> cf. Andrew Walker, *Consumerism, Personhood and the Future of Mission*, Unpublished Paper given at "Seduction or Evangelism. Consumerism and Late 20th Century Christianity" Conference (Cheltenham & Gloucester College of Higher Education, 5 Feb. 1998)

<sup>352</sup> See Craig M. Gay, "An Ironic Cage: the Rationalization of Modern Economic Life," in Sampson et al, *op cit*, p. 265

<sup>353</sup> Sara Diamond, *Roads to Dominion. Right-wing Movements and Political Power in the United States* (New York/London: The Guildford Press, 1995), p. 6

<sup>354</sup> James Davison Hunter, *American Evangelicalism. Conservative Religion and the Quandary of Modernity* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1983), pp. 15 ff

<sup>355</sup> McGuire, *op cit*, p. 217

<sup>356</sup> See Schoenfeld, "Religion, Class Conflict, and Social Justice," pp. 43 f

<sup>357</sup> See Peter Berger, "The Class Struggle in American Religion," *The Christian Century* (25 February 1981), pp. 194 ff



“fractions”,<sup>358</sup> with the “new” element founded on education rather than direct production.<sup>359</sup>

### Religious Change

This socio-economic division produces corresponding eschatologically-grounded political millennialisms. Millennialism is not only the preserve of the poor. In North America, Cold War geopolitics and pre-millennialist scenarios have mutually supported each other.<sup>360</sup> Dominant class evangelicals’ amillennialist view of history, however, is a “conservative” denial of “utopia”.<sup>361</sup> Congruent with their feelings of security, amillennialism guarantees their stability against further historical progression, hence their call for responsible Christian citizenship in a society where they feel comfortable. Retrenching class fundamentalists either turn inward pietistically, or depict a worsening society which can only be rescued by Christ’s premillennial return.<sup>362</sup> These express different theodicies. Founded on their experience of successfully managing their own lives, the former retain confidence in their ability to effect change. The latter turn to their privatised religious ghetto.<sup>363</sup>

Both however aim to restore the “sacred canopy” of a unitary socio-religious framework for society.<sup>364</sup> This theocratic resistance to pluralism takes in the United States the form of civil religion, and in the United Kingdom an erastian nostalgia for a state-Church. The “coincidence”<sup>365</sup> of secular and religious “neo-conservatism” in the 1980s<sup>366</sup> seemed to presage evangelicalism’s resurgence as its Protestant individualism suited a government ideology relinquishing the state’s role in welfare, and relying on individual provision, private charities and Churches.<sup>367</sup> It is unlikely, however, that they will succeed in revitalising either their tradition or society.<sup>368</sup> In both countries, evangelicals are not attracting as many

<sup>358</sup> See Nicos Poulantzas, *Political Power and Social Classes*, pp. 84 ff

<sup>359</sup> See Nicos Poulantzas, *Classes in Contemporary Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1978), pp. 224 ff

<sup>360</sup> See Grant Wacker, “Planning Ahead: The Enduring Appeal of Prophecy Belief,” *The Christian Century* (19 January 1994), pp. 48 f

<sup>361</sup> Mannheim, *op cit*, pp. 206 ff

<sup>362</sup> *ibid*, p. 213

<sup>363</sup> See Roberts, *op cit*, pp. 225, 230

<sup>364</sup> cf. Frank J. Lechner, “Global Fundamentalism,” in Swatos, *op cit*, p. 22

<sup>365</sup> A. Kee, *The Way of Transcendence* (London: SCM, 1985 [2nd Edtn.]), p. 13

<sup>366</sup> Cornel West, “Decentering Europe. The Contemporary Crisis in Culture,” in *Prophetic Thought in Postmodern Times* (Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press, 1993), p. 140

<sup>367</sup> See Kenneth Leech, *The Eye of the Storm. Spiritual Resources for the Pursuit of Justice* (London: DLT, 1992), pp. 110 ff

<sup>368</sup> See Benton Johnson, “Religion and Politics in America: The Last Twenty Years,” in Hammond, *op cit*, p. 311



members as charismatics, and their denominations are aging. Furthermore, they are divided politically, and mainly limit their political stance to “moral” issues.

Moreover, societal pluralism has progressed so far that it is difficult to see how it can be reversed without draconian measures. Institutional differentiation will continue to dissolve Christianity’s legitimating role, especially that of exclusivist evangelicalism which will become increasingly ideologically “residual”.<sup>369</sup> Consequently the appeal to specifically Christian motifs for society-wide mobilisation will become rarer.<sup>370</sup> As evangelicals realise that returning to a unitary culture is not possible, they will increasingly form “subcultures... each... claiming total truth”.<sup>371</sup> Because their minority status is derived from necessity not theological conviction, however, their “theonomous” habit perseveres. Probably therefore, as Cox writes, they will continue to oscillate between confrontation and withdrawal into a “minitheonomy”.<sup>372</sup>

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<sup>369</sup> See Raymond Williams, *op cit*, p. 122

<sup>370</sup> See McGuire, *op cit*, pp. 230, 255

<sup>371</sup> John Dillenberger, “Roots of the American Ethos,” in Needleman & Barker, *op cit*, p. 24

<sup>372</sup> Cox, *Religion in the Secular City*, p. 62



## CHAPTER 3

### THE CHARISMATIC - PENTECOSTAL MODEL OF PROPHECY

#### GOD SPEAKS TODAY

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

The elements of Charismatic-Pentecostal “prophecy” are the *Messenger* as inspired individual, the *Message* as supernatural knowledge or insight, and the *Manner* as non-rational inspiration or revelation. The latter embraces a spectrum of revelatory modes. Wayne Grudem’s influential Biblical examination restricted consideration of prophecy to its portrayal in 1 Corinthians.<sup>1</sup> However Mark Cartledge’s empirical study<sup>2</sup> and Max Turner’s seminal essay<sup>3</sup> included the word of wisdom, word of knowledge, discerning spirits, visions, dreams, and angelic visitations within the spectrum of prophetic experiences. This section outlines the major developments in the Charismatic-Pentecostal model of prophecy.

From its beginning in the 1906 Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles, prophecy has characterised Pentecostalism, taking the form of congregational exhortations, visions of judgment, and eschatological expectations of Christ’s second coming.<sup>4</sup> According to Pentecostal statesman, Donald Gee, prophecy was the spontaneous product of “sudden inspiration”,<sup>5</sup> and “covers all inspired utterances.”<sup>6</sup> Drawing on a person’s “emotional” rather than cerebral side, prophecy was unlike teaching.<sup>7</sup> Prophecy was not a natural ability, however, but the “direct result” of the Holy Spirit,<sup>8</sup> an “entirely

<sup>1</sup> See Wayne Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians*

<sup>2</sup> Cartledge, *op cit*, pp. 32 ff

<sup>3</sup> See Max Turner, “Spiritual Gifts Then and Now,” *Vox Evangelica* (Vol. XV, 1985), p. 41

<sup>4</sup> See Frank Bartleman, *Azusa Street* (South Plainfield, NJ: Bridge Publishing Inc., 1980[1925]), p. 174, 177

<sup>5</sup> Donald Gee, *The Ministry-Gifts of Christ* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1930), p. 39

<sup>6</sup> Donald Gee, *Concerning Spiritual Gifts* (Springfield, MO: The Gospel Publishing House, 1937[1928]), p. 42

<sup>7</sup> *ibid*, p. 42

<sup>8</sup> *ibid*, p. 80



supernatural” view reiterated by the American Pentecostal Harold Horton.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, Gee recognised that prophecy was “not infallible”.<sup>10</sup> Because prophecy had three possible sources - the Holy Spirit, evil spirits, and the human spirit - “safeguards” were needed to prevent abuse.<sup>11</sup>

Pentecostalism’s attempt to control charisma, however, follows Weber’s processes of routinisation and bureaucratisation.<sup>12</sup> In practice, the discouragement of prophecy in the Assemblies of God,<sup>13</sup> and their desire for acceptance by evangelicals, led them to emphasise Scriptural exegesis over prophecy,<sup>14</sup> or to identify prophecy with preaching as in revivalist branches of evangelicalism.<sup>15</sup> Recently William Kay, a former lecturer at Mattersey Hall (the British Assemblies of God college), has restated the official stance in terms identical to Gee’s fifty years previously. For Kay, prophecy is:

1. not a natural talent;<sup>16</sup>
2. addressed to whole congregation not individuals;<sup>17</sup>
3. non-directive;<sup>18</sup>
4. follows the baptism in the Spirit;<sup>19</sup>
5. spontaneous.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Harold Horton, *The Gifts of the Spirit* (Detroit, MICH; Harold Horton/ Shreveport, L: The Voice of Healing, 1949[1934]), p. 172

<sup>10</sup> Gee, *Concerning Spiritual Gifts*, p. 86

<sup>11</sup> *ibid*, p. 47

<sup>12</sup> See Margaret M. Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads. Charisma and Institutional Dilemmas* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1989), pp. 127 ff

<sup>13</sup> Poloma, *op cit*, p. 27

<sup>14</sup> *ibid*, p. 196

<sup>15</sup> See Aaron Linford, “The Preacher as Prophet,” *The Ministry. A Manual of Christian Service* (Vol. 1, No. 3, July 1963), pp. 58 f

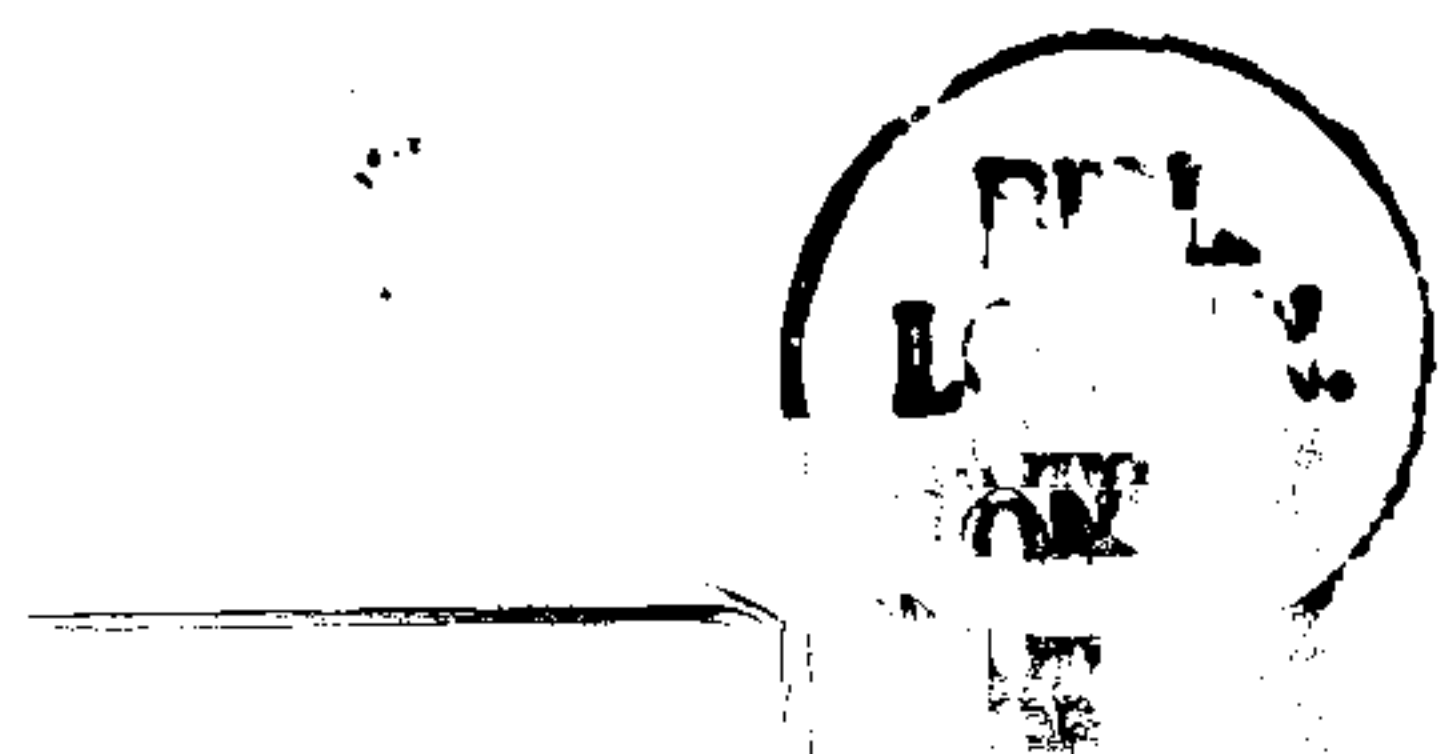
<sup>16</sup> William K. Kay, *Prophecy!* (Nottingham: Life Stream Publications/Mattersey: Mattersey Hall, 1991), p. 51

<sup>17</sup> *ibid*, p. 54

<sup>18</sup> *ibid*, p. 71

<sup>19</sup> *ibid*, pp. 80 ff

<sup>20</sup> *ibid*, p. 86





Prophecy however is “the Achilles heel of Pentecostalism”.<sup>21</sup> Pentecostal revivalism and belief in the Spirit’s unpredictability, provide a countervailing tendency to ensure the “transmission” of charisma. Regular *waves* of revival are therefore not ‘faddism’ but integral to the Pentecostal experience, and appeal to the “latent” original prophetic impulse to awaken the Church.<sup>22</sup> Two movements, The Apostolic Church in Britain and Latter Rain Revival in Canada, illustrate this resurgence of charisma in the twentieth century.

### **The Apostolic Church**

Gee warned against neglecting “actual exercise” of the gifts.<sup>23</sup> But non-use, plus the influence of Biblical criticism and liberal theology provoked the founding of the Apostolic Church.<sup>24</sup> Among Apostolics, the *Messenger* became more authoritative, and the *Message* extended to Church government. They believed God had ordained a “special order” for Church government, which included the offices of prophet and apostle.<sup>25</sup> This institutionalisation-without-routinisation went beyond the usual Pentecostal understanding of prophecy as exhortation.<sup>26</sup> Instead came a series of levels: the “spirit of prophecy” which could fall on anyone in a meeting; the “gift of prophecy” which was restricted to certain men in the local congregation; and the “office” which was a “set” position in the Church as a whole.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Desmond Cartwright, *Interview* (30.9.97)

<sup>22</sup> See Michael Hill, *op cit*, pp. 175 f

<sup>23</sup> Gee, *Concerning Spiritual Gifts*, p. 46

<sup>24</sup> See D. P. Williams, *The Prophetic Ministry (or The Voice Gifts) In the Church* (Penygroes: The Apostolic Church, General Headquarters, 1931), pp. 73, 75

<sup>25</sup> *ibid*, p. 3

<sup>26</sup> See Walter J. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals* (London: SCM, 1972), p. 345

<sup>27</sup> Williams, *op cit*, p. 22



Whilst every prophet needed to be confident enough of their inspiration to say “Thus saith the Lord”,<sup>28</sup> the “scope”<sup>29</sup> of their authority was restricted to their “section”.<sup>30</sup> The office was not so limited however. As an ascension gift from Christ to the Church,<sup>31</sup> the prophet had a role in “unveiling and confirming doctrine”, “perfecting the saints”, prediction, and “choosing ministers”.<sup>32</sup> In addition, people could “inquire” of the prophet for directive guidance in their lives.<sup>33</sup> Since prophets’ own attitudes could taint the word,<sup>34</sup> however, prophecy was also seen as something to be trained in as with the Biblical “schools of the prophets”.<sup>35</sup>

Gee vigorously opposed the “exaggeration” of prophecy which the office implied.<sup>36</sup> He criticised “enquiring” for guidance<sup>37</sup> and the prophetic choosing of ministers.<sup>38</sup> He also thought the replacement of government through elders with apostles and prophets would produce a fresh version of Catholic “Priestcraft”.<sup>39</sup> For him, someone became a “prophet” by using the gift, not by possessing the “title”.<sup>40</sup> Horton again echoed Gee’s criticisms of this “human system”,<sup>41</sup> arguing that guidance required “common sense and natural judgment” rather than prophecy.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, Horton forbade prefacing prophecy with “Thus saith the Lord”. Instead of directly speaking God’s words, the prophet should speak “about” Him, since he “speaks by the third Person of the Trinity, not the second”.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> T. N. Turnbull, *Prophecy in the Church Age* (Bradford: Puritan Press, 1971), p. 44

<sup>29</sup> *The Apostolic Church. Its Principles and Practices* (Penygroes: Apostolic Publications, 1937), p. 149

<sup>30</sup> *ibid*, p. xix

<sup>31</sup> *Ephesians 4. 11*

<sup>32</sup> T. N. Turnbull, *What God Hath Wrought. A short history of the Apostolic Church* (Bradford: Puritan Press, 1959), p. 176

<sup>33</sup> *The Apostolic Church*, p. 150

<sup>34</sup> Williams, *op cit*, p. 31

<sup>35</sup> *ibid*, pp. 26 ff

<sup>36</sup> Donald Gee, *The Pentecostal Movement* (London: Elim Publishing Co. Ltd., 1949[1941]), p. 107

<sup>37</sup> Gee, *The Ministry-Gifts of Christ*, p. 43

<sup>38</sup> *ibid*, pp. 83 f

<sup>39</sup> *ibid*, p. 98

<sup>40</sup> *ibid*, p. 86

<sup>41</sup> Horton, *op cit*, p. 174

<sup>42</sup> *ibid*, p. 178

<sup>43</sup> *ibid*, pp. 187 f



### The Latter Rain

In North America, the Latter Rain Revival, which began in 1949, reiterated the Apostolic Church's restoration of the prophetic office, but added the Prophetic Presbytery in which prophets laid hands on someone to impart or discern their ministry gifts. They also countered Dispensational teaching that the end-times would be characterised by major apostasy, with eschatological predictions in which the Kingdom would be ushered in by a victorious Church.<sup>44</sup>

The Latter Rain benefited from the cooperation and doctrinal moderation which replaced earlier Pentecostal sectarianism. Furthermore the higher socio-economic status of Pentecostals, whilst contributing to decreased fervour in some,<sup>45</sup> also prompted a yearning in others for revival.<sup>46</sup> Arising like the Apostolic Church after wartime, the Latter Rain's introduction of "offices" may also have been influenced by the post-World War Two re-establishment of authority structures after the destabilisation of social roles during wartime's liminal period, and the apocalyptic eschatology shaped by the Cold War.

In 1949 the Assemblies of God condemned the Revival, in part for its prophetic excesses.<sup>47</sup> Nevertheless, as we shall see, the movement has formed an underground tributary for the charismatic movement. In Britain its influence has been transmitted through former Apostolic Church pastor Cecil Cousen, who while not in complete agreement transmitted the revival's main prophetic features.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> See Richard M. Riss, *A Survey of 20 th - Century Revival Movements in North America* (Peabody, MASS: Hendrickson, 1988), pp. 119, 124

<sup>45</sup> See Hollenweger, *op cit*, p. 33 f

<sup>46</sup> See David Edwin Harrell, *All Things Are Possible. The Healing and Charismatic Revivals in Modern America* (Bloomington/London: Indiana University Press, 1975), pp. 18 f

<sup>47</sup> See Kay, *op cit*, pp. 97 f

<sup>48</sup> See Cecil Cousen, *The Gifts of the Spirit* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1986), pp. 51 f, 145 ff



## Charismatic Renewal

Charismatic Renewal challenged routinised Pentecostalism, and stimulated fresh interest in prophecy.<sup>49</sup> Pentecostalism remained conservative, however, towards prophetic innovations,<sup>50</sup> and renewal within mainline denominations did not adopt Pentecostal doctrines, for example concerning Christian initiation and Spirit baptism.<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, charismatic and Pentecostal prophecy exhibited a similar *Manner*. Dennis Bennett, Episcopal pioneer of renewal in North America, again conceived prophecy as declaring the “mind of God”, which was discerned supernaturally not through one’s “own thoughts”.<sup>52</sup> One addition however was prophetic guidance, albeit only given to confirm previous leadings.<sup>53</sup> This modified prophecy’s *Message* from congregational to individual application.

The change can be understood by examining the social context of renewal, since spiritual phenomena can have multiple social meanings. For the poor, Pentecostal prophecy gives them a voice, empowering them to speak. For the middle classes, charismatic prophecy also enables them to be spoken to. A product of the 1960s’ anti-authoritarian and participative culture,<sup>54</sup> Charismatic prophecy challenged the monopoly of expertise by conservative Churches, and secular institutions, on significant speech.<sup>55</sup> But it also gave the chance to be spoken to.

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<sup>49</sup> See Hugh Mitchell, “The Voice Gifts. Some observations on the Gift of Prophecy,” *The Ministry* (Vol. 4, No. 2, April - June 1966), p. 48

<sup>50</sup> See Richard D. Massey, “The Word of God: ‘Thus Saith the Lord,’” in Keith Warrington (Ed.), *Pentecostal Perspectives* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1998), p. 79

<sup>51</sup> See Graham Baldwin, “Pentecostal, Charismatic or What’s in a Name?” *King’s Theological Review* (Vol. X, No. 1, Spring 1987), pp. 17 f

<sup>52</sup> Dennis & Rita Bennett, *The Holy Spirit and You* (London/Eastbourne: Coverdale House Publishers, 1971), p. 108

<sup>53</sup> *ibid*, pp. 116 f

<sup>54</sup> See Hastings, *A History of English Christianity*, pp. 515 f

<sup>55</sup> See Fenn, *Liturgies and Trials: The Secularization of Religious Language* (Oxford: blackwell, 1982), p. 119



Renewal provided a reassuring sense that God still spoke to individuals today,<sup>56</sup> and represented an emotional move for healing and consolation in a “post-industrial society”,<sup>57</sup> characterised by accelerating change and psychic dislocation.<sup>58</sup> Compensating for a dearth of “I-thou” relationships,<sup>59</sup> prophecy compensated the successful for the emotional costs of their “success”.<sup>60</sup> To lose “control” safely,<sup>61</sup> guided by prophecy, was an infantile regression to dependence in a world which demanded adult competence. Consequently, personal prophecies for direction and guidance, among displaced, mobile middle class populations, played a greater part in renewal than in Pentecostalism, with its base in poorer solidary communities.

Furthermore, although renewal provided opportunities for participation, its position within established denominations meant prophecy was demystified and domesticated for middle class congregations, and made non-threatening for their hierarchies.<sup>62</sup> For example, the Anglican Michael Green wrote that prophecy did not require “Elizabethan English”,<sup>63</sup> and was not ecstatic but involved intelligible language.<sup>64</sup> Nor did it contravene good order, or imply “secession” to new churches.<sup>65</sup> Liturgical services could provide spaces for prophecy, during “quiet reflection” after worship.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> See Cartledge, *op cit*, p. 133

<sup>57</sup> Douglas Davies, “The Charismatic Ethic and the Spirit of Post-Industrialism,” in David Martin & Peter Mullen (Eds.), *Strange Gifts. A Guide to Charismatic Renewal* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), pp. 137 ff

<sup>58</sup> See Alvin Toffler, *Future Shock* (London: Pan Books, 1971), pp. 40 f

<sup>59</sup> Jean-Jacques Surmond, *Word and Spirit at Play. Towards a Charismatic Theology* (London: SCM, 1994), p. 182

<sup>60</sup> Hervieu-Léger, *op cit*, p. 144

<sup>61</sup> Richard A. Baer, “Quaker Silence, Catholic Liturgy, and Pentecostal Glossolalia - Some Functional Similarities,” in Russell Spittler, *op cit*, p. 163

<sup>62</sup> e.g. James Haig Ferguson, “Prophecy,” *Anglicans for Renewal* (No. 28, Spring 1987), pp. 22 ff

<sup>63</sup> *ibid*, p. 260

<sup>64</sup> Michael Green, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1975), p. 210

<sup>65</sup> *ibid*, p. 273

<sup>66</sup> *ibid*, p. 261



## Catholic Renewal

Catholic charismatic renewal made some distinctive contributions to understanding prophecy. George Maloney tended to regard prophecy as an metaphor for the spiritual life of all baptised Christians,<sup>67</sup> but Bruce Yocum's book is still a classic text among charismatics.<sup>68</sup> Like Bennett, Yocum valued prophecy's role in guidance.<sup>69</sup> He however departed from Bennett's supernaturalism. Yocum saw prophecy as a permanent possession to be "stirred up" whenever "appropriate",<sup>70</sup> and recognised degrees of prophecy - false, "impure, and "weak"<sup>71</sup> - which seemed to admit merely human influence on prophecy.

Here Yocum's Catholic heritage shows. Aquinas's concept of "natural prophecy",<sup>72</sup> reflected in Karl Rahner's study of prophecy<sup>73</sup> meant that Catholics were more open than Protestants to this human element.<sup>74</sup> Peter Hocken therefore could write about "primary" and "secondary" causation in spiritual experience,<sup>75</sup> based on a more positive valuation of "nature and creation".<sup>76</sup> Catholicism's "incarnational" approach to pneumatology (and therefore prophecy) differs from Pentecostalism's dualistic "theophanic" spirituality,<sup>77</sup> and stresses the continuity rather than the discontinuity between the Divine and the human.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> See George A. Maloney, *Listen, Prophets!* (Denville, NJ: New Dimension Books, n.d.)

<sup>68</sup> See Bruce Yocum, *Prophecy. Exercising the prophetic gifts of the Spirit in the church today* (Ann Arbor, MICH: Servant Books, 1976)

<sup>69</sup> *ibid*, p. 43

<sup>70</sup> *ibid*, pp. 50 f

<sup>71</sup> *ibid*, pp. 105 f

<sup>72</sup> See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae Vol. 45, Prophecy and other Charisms* (2a2ae. 171 - 8) (London: Blackfriars/Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1970), pp. 29 ff

<sup>73</sup> See Karl Rahner, *Prophecy and Visions* (London: Burns & Oates, 1963)

<sup>74</sup> See George Every, "Prophecy in the Christian Era," in Simon Tugwell, George Every, John Orme Mills & Peter Hocken, *New Heaven? New Earth?* (London: DLT, 1976), p. 198

<sup>75</sup> Peter Hocken, "The Significance and Potential of Pentecostalism," *ibid*, p. 19

<sup>76</sup> *ibid*, p. 38

<sup>77</sup> Frank D. Machia, "God Present in a Confused Situation; The Mixed Influence of the Charismatic Movement on Classical Pentecostalism," *Pneuma* (Vol. 18, No. 1, Spring 1996), p. 39

<sup>78</sup> See Peter Hocken, "Renewal and Revival. A Catholic Perspective on the Toronto Blessing," *Good News* (No. 117, May-June 1995), p. 18



Consequently, Yocum appealed to historical examples<sup>79</sup> and Hocken situated prophecy within the Catholic contemplative and mystical traditions.<sup>80</sup> Contextually though, Catholic renewal was a deliberate revitalisation movement, a response to the “*New Pentecost*” which accompanied and followed Vatican II.<sup>81</sup> Like renewal in general, however, Catholic renewal was a reaction to the crisis in authority, caused by social change and encouraged by Vatican II’s questioning of received certainties. Like Protestants, middle class Catholics sought reassurance through personal prophecy. Hocken, however, writes that the mid-1970s marked the beginning of charismatic decline,<sup>82</sup> illustrated by the shift from celebratory prophecies at the Rome Charismatic Conference in 1975,<sup>83</sup> to prophetic calls for repentance at the Kansas City Ecumenical Conference in 1977.<sup>84</sup>

### Restoration

The zenith of renewal in Britain paralleled that of the States. After the disbanding of the Fountain Trust in 1980, Renewal was replaced by another charismatic wave - Restorationism.<sup>85</sup> Like the Apostolic Church and Latter Rain, Restorationism advocated the foundational role of prophets and apostles for the contemporary Church, inspiring “action” and Church-planting.<sup>86</sup> Like its precursors, Restorationism also followed the liminal period of 1960s anti-authoritarianism.<sup>87</sup> Paralleling the electoral victories of right-wing parties in Britain and America, order was restored in the Church over the creativity of charismatic experimentation.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Yocum, *op cit*, pp. 19 ff

<sup>80</sup> See Peter Hocken, “Charismatics and Mystics,” *Theological Renewal* (No. 1, October-November 1975), pp. 11 ff

<sup>81</sup> See Leon Joseph Suenens, *A New Pentecost?* (London: DLT, 1975), p. x

<sup>82</sup> See Hocken, “The Charismatic Movement in the United States,” p. 211

<sup>83</sup> See “Prophecies given at St. Peter’s Basilica during the closing Eucharist on Pentecost Monday,” *New Covenant* (Vol. 5, No. 1, July 1975), p. 26

<sup>84</sup> See “Prophecies from the General Sessions,” *New Covenant* (Vol. 7, No. 4, October 1977), p. 10

<sup>85</sup> See Andrew Walker, *Restoring the Kingdom. The Radical Christianity of the House Church Movement* (Guildford: Eagle, 1998)

<sup>86</sup> See Terry Virgo, “A Prophetic People,” *New Frontiers Magazine* (June-July 1998), p. 5

<sup>87</sup> See Adrian Hastings, *A History of English Christianity*, p.584

<sup>88</sup> *ibid*, pp. 619 f



As well as being institutionalised, prophecy's *Manner* was routinised, becoming something to be learned through a work book.<sup>89</sup> Classical Pentecostals however resisted this supplanting of the sovereign Spirit by "mechanics".<sup>90</sup> Another disagreement over *Message* involved eschatology. While not fully embracing post-millennialism, Restorationists have replaced the supposed "gloom" of pre-millennialism, with a triumphalist expectation of a victorious end-time Church.<sup>91</sup> This relies on a replacement theology which applies Scriptural promises to Israel to the Church,<sup>92</sup> and dominion theology which sees a governmental role for the institutional Church in society.<sup>93</sup> In Britain however prophecy's political implications did not emerge until the 1990s, when Restorationism was already waning.<sup>94</sup>

In Britain the alternative to Restoration was John Wimber's Third Wave.<sup>95</sup> Although in America he was merely another independent charismatic pastor, here his distance from Restorationist teaching on "offices" made him more acceptable to mainstream renewal's denominational ecclesiologies. His "power evangelism"<sup>96</sup> also appealed to evangelical feelings of powerlessness about institutional decline, in a 1980s culture of 'power dressing' and 'power breakfasts'.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> See Hugh Thompson, *Be Eager To Prophecy* (Bradford: School of the Word, Harvestime, 1987), p. 9

<sup>90</sup> Jack Hayford, "For You May All Prophecy," *Renewal* (No. 209, October 1993), p. 14

<sup>91</sup> Max Turner, "Ecclesiology in the Major 'Apostolic' Restorationist Churches in the United Kingdom," *Vox Evangelica* (Vol. XIX, 1989), p. 93

<sup>92</sup> See George Canty, "The Kingdom of God," in *Discussion Papers Presented to a Theological Conference. The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick Derbyshire, October 1991* (Cheltenham, Gloucester: Elim Pentecostal Church, n.d.), p. 233

<sup>93</sup> See William G. Mullan, "Dominion and Kingdom theology," *ibid*, pp. 241 ff

<sup>94</sup> See David Mansell, "The Great Commission and World Issues," *Restoration* (September/October 1991), p. 17

<sup>95</sup> See Walker, *Restoring the Kingdom*, pp. 310 ff

<sup>96</sup> See John Wimber, *Power Evangelism. Signs and Wonders Today* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1985)

<sup>97</sup> See Martyn Percy, *Words, Wonders and Power. Understanding Contemporary Christian Fundamentalism and Revivalism* (London: SPCK, 1996), p. 31



## The Prophetic Movement

Wimber, however, also suffered from “power failure”.<sup>98</sup> When his own Association of Vineyard Churches lost momentum, the so-called Kansas City Prophets gained influence over him through promising new power-tools for effective evangelism.<sup>99</sup> This united the Restorationist and Third Wave streams.<sup>100</sup> But although Latter Rain teachings were introduced into the Vineyard, prophetic office now centred on platform ministry more than government. Whereas Wimber’s methodology had previously incorporated 1960s-style democratic participation by those attending his “clinics”, now power became imparted through the prophet’s physical “presence”.<sup>101</sup> This reawakens the premodern image of the “sacred person” as a conduit for spiritual power,<sup>102</sup> laid dormant by Protestant and Enlightenment rationalism.<sup>103</sup> The prophetic power language however raised worries about manipulation, and the Evangelical Alliance warned against prophetic as well as sexual “abuse” in Churches.<sup>104</sup>

David Pytches, who introduced these prophets to Britain, believes that they brought a “new level” of prophecy through their accurate “words of knowledge.”<sup>105</sup> This however, while new here, was familiar in America from the Latter Rain. What was new was the idea of a “Prophetic Movement” embracing Rick Joyner and Bill Hamon (who claimed to have begun the Prophetic Movement in 1988).<sup>106</sup> Moreover, 1990 saw not only the Kansas City Prophets coming to Britain, but Texan prophet Dale Gentry, who prophesied over Gerald Coates’ Pioneer leadership team.<sup>107</sup> This

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<sup>98</sup> *ibid*, p. 91

<sup>99</sup> See Percy, *op cit*, p. 110

<sup>100</sup> See Stephen Hunt, “The ‘Toronto Blessing’: A Rumour of Angels?” *Journal of Contemporary Religion* (Vol. 10, No. 3, 1995), p. 267

<sup>101</sup> Percy, *op cit*, p. 54

<sup>102</sup> cf. Antonie Wessels, *Secularized Europe. Who Will Carry Off Its Soul?* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1996), pp. 14 ff

<sup>103</sup> See Thomas, *op cit*, p. 263

<sup>104</sup> See Evangelical Alliance, *Allegations of Abuse. The Church’s Responsibilities* (London: Evangelical Alliance, n.d.), § 5.0

<sup>105</sup> David Pytches, *Interview* (18.10.96)

<sup>106</sup> See Bill Hamon, *Prophets and the Prophetic Movement. God’s Prophetic Move Today* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 1990), p. 95

<sup>107</sup> Michael Scott, *Interview* (11.7.96)



“Movement” naturally became a self-fulfilling prophecy, since these prophets went earnestly to work ensuring the predictions came true.

The “Movement” arose from two factors internal to the charismatic movement. Firstly, the Restoration timetable itself designated the 80s as the decade of the prophet.<sup>108</sup> Secondly, the organic process of differentiation in the division of labour split individual gifts from an integrated spirituality as they became specialised ministries. In addition, there were social influences. Thatcher and Reagan’s re-emphasis on the Cold War contributed to notions of spiritual warfare, and political attacks on welfare in favour of individual provision made prophecy into a valuable psychological resource for busy middle class people.<sup>109</sup> Moreover the entrepreneurial ethos encouraged individual prophets, healers and evangelists to establish their own ministries.

Max Turner of London Bible College expresses an emerging consensus on prophecy. He describes his approach as a (very English) “*via media*” between competing views.<sup>110</sup> While opposing Grudem’s distinction between apostles and New Testament prophets,<sup>111</sup> he agrees that New Testament prophecy was subordinate to Scriptural authority, oracular in form<sup>112</sup> and “mixed” in quality. The last insight encapsulates the mature charismatic understanding of prophecy as a Divine-human mixture of revelation and opinion. Prophecy then is frequently shaped by our own theological presuppositions, and should not be used to support doctrines.<sup>113</sup> Although Turner notes that prophecy is often accompanied by mild dissociation or trances, he claims that prophecy produces no distinctive psychological state.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> See Bill Hamon, *op cit*, p. 24

<sup>109</sup> See James Ryle, *The Hippo in the Garden. Hearing the Voice of God in the 21 st Century* (Guildford: Highland Books, 1992) , p. 47

<sup>110</sup> Max Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts*, p. 358

<sup>111</sup> Max Turner, “Spiritual Gifts Then and Now,” p. 16

<sup>112</sup> *ibid*, p. 13

<sup>113</sup> Max Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts*, p. 324

<sup>114</sup> *ibid*, p. 319



## Toronto Blessing

The Toronto blessing was a movement of spiritual renewal or revival, which began in Toronto in 1991 and swept through the global charismatic community. The blessing prompted some new prophetic insights. There have been personal prophecies, but the movement's leaders also claimed that the revival fulfilled predictions given by Marc Dupont, a leader in the Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship.<sup>115</sup> Dupont also predicted a "Prophetic Restoration" in the 1990s,<sup>116</sup> and foresaw other "waves" of future blessing.<sup>117</sup>

The blessing's main prophetic development was the emergence of ecstatic prophecy, with its physiological manifestations and psychological explanations. Firstly, prophecies and visions have been typically received after people have fallen to the floor under the "anointing" of the Spirit. These prophecies have referred to imminent revival or personal reassurances. In addition, the sounds emitted by people are likened to animal noises and interpreted as symbolic signs from God.<sup>118</sup> Here is an example of "bodied spirituality" where the Spirit is not merely mediated through emotions but physically received. Pentecostal revivalism has always included bodily seizures, but now the social context has changed. Rather than being an anti-modern reaction,<sup>119</sup> today's physically-mediated prophecy is an aspect of postmodern valorising of the body.

Secondly, psychological explanations are increasingly attractive for explaining spiritual experience, including prophecy. Denis Bennett wanted to safeguard the supernatural origin of prophecy. Consequently he wrote that prophecy was received by the human

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<sup>115</sup> See Marc Dupont, *1994: The Year of the Lion* (Mississauga, ON: Mantle of Praise Ministries, n.d.)

<sup>116</sup> See Marc Dupont, *The Elijah Years. Insights for the '90s: A Decade of Prophetic Restoration* (Brampton, ON: Marc Dupont/Mantle of Praise ministries, 1996)

<sup>117</sup> See Marc Dupont, "The Next Wave," *Spread the Fire* (Vol. 2, No. 6, December 1996), p. 8

<sup>118</sup> See John Arnott, *The Father's Blessing* (Orlando, FL: Creation House, 1995), pp. 168 ff

<sup>119</sup> See Percy, *op cit*, p. 10



“spirit” not the “intellect”.<sup>120</sup> But charismatic prophecy has always had psychological explanations, especially that it represents an “intuitive” knowing. Morton Kelsey saw prophecy as an expression of imaginative insights from the Jungian “unconscious”,<sup>121</sup> and Daniel Tappeiner attributed it to a “hypnogogic state”.<sup>122</sup> Jean-Jacques Suurmond<sup>123</sup> and John Goldingay<sup>124</sup> reprise the idea of prophecy and visions as intuitive, visual correctives to rationalism. Such explanations are not necessarily reductionist. As Tappeiner wrote, psychological explanations are merely the “natural mechanisms” for the exercise of charismata.<sup>125</sup>

Recent phenomena though have prompted an apologetical search for psychological explanations. David Pytches originally employed a tripartite anthropology of spirit, soul and body, explaining that the Holy Spirit reveals things to the human spirit which then transmits them through the psyche or soul.<sup>126</sup> Influenced by his former college tutor Stafford Wright,<sup>127</sup> Pytches thus defined prophecy as “psychic”, in that the psyche receives impressions from a variety of sources - good and bad. Recently Pytches has gone further and suggests that “right brain” hemisphericity may account for certain people having flashes of intuition.<sup>128</sup> Following the Toronto blessing, Mark Stibbe<sup>129</sup> and Patrick Dixon<sup>130</sup> have used the concept of “altered states of consciousness” to explain prophetic insights. Like Pytches,<sup>131</sup> and unlike earlier cautious charismatics, they are willing therefore to say that prophecy can be an

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<sup>120</sup> Dennis Bennett, *op cit*, p. 118

<sup>121</sup> See Morton T. Kelsey, *Encounter with God. A Theology of Christian Experience* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1972), pp. 186 f

<sup>122</sup> See Daniel A. Tappeiner, “A Psychological Paradigm for the Interpretation of the Charismatic Phenomenon of Prophecy,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* (Vol. 5, No. 1, Winter 1977), p. 28

<sup>123</sup> See Suurmond, *Word and Spirit at Play*, p. 24

<sup>124</sup> See John Goldingay, “Charismatic Spirituality,” *Theology* (Vol. XCIX, No. 789, May-June 1996), p. 184

<sup>125</sup> Daniel Tappeiner, *op cit*, p. 23

<sup>126</sup> See David Pytches, *Some Said It Thundered* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1990), pp. 197 f

<sup>127</sup> David Pytches, *Interview* (18.10.96)

<sup>128</sup> David Pytches, *Prophecy in the Local Church* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1993), pp. 295 ff

<sup>129</sup> See Mark Stibbe, *Times of Refreshing. A Practical Theology of Renewal for Today* (London: Marshall Pickering, 1995), pp. 72 ff

<sup>130</sup> See Patrick Dixon, *Signs of Revival* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1995), pp. 258

<sup>131</sup> See David Pytches, *Prophecy in the Local Church*, pp. 240 ff



“ecstatic experience”.<sup>132</sup>

Psychological explanations also occur among second generation educated Pentecostals disenchanted with simplistic teaching. For example, Stephen Parker has attempted to reevaluate Pentecostal experience. He considers Pentecostalism’s attempt at Scriptural legitimation mistaken, since it misses the distinctive “role of experience” in Pentecostal hermeneutics.<sup>133</sup> Dialoguing with Tillich rather than evangelicalism,<sup>134</sup> Parker like Harvey Cox produces an analysis of experience. Like Cox, however, he neglects fundamentalist and Holiness influences at Azusa Street. Reinterpreting pneumatology as psychology, Parker describes the Holy Spirit’s guidance, for example through prophecy, as “creative regression”<sup>135</sup> which accesses “intuitive” ways of knowing.<sup>136</sup>

### Postmodernity?

Has this bodied intuitionism become a fully postmodern spirituality? As Joe Holland suggests, it challenges rational “control”,<sup>137</sup> and Percy is correct to see in it an expression of Berger’s inductivist option.<sup>138</sup> While “emergent” ecstatic prophecy communicates God’s immanence, however, the experience of Someone-Else speaking to us demonstrates a “residual” dualism.<sup>139</sup> David Harvey identifies the fluidity of the Holy Spirit with postmodernity, and contrast this with modernity’s respect for rational authority embodied by the symbol of the “Father”.<sup>140</sup> But charismatic prophecy, while stressing the Spirit’s freedom, also maintains strong respect for the

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<sup>132</sup> Patrick Dixon, *op cit*, p. 259

<sup>133</sup> See Stephen E. Parker, *Led by the Spirit. Toward a Practical Theology of Pentecostal Discernment and Decision Making. Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series 7* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), pp. 20 ff

<sup>134</sup> *ibid*, pp. 145 ff

<sup>135</sup> *ibid*, pp. 117 ff

<sup>136</sup> *ibid*, p. 202

<sup>137</sup> See Joe Holland, “A Postmodern Vision of Spirituality and Society,” in David Ray Griffin (Ed.), *Spirituality and Society* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1988), p. 50

<sup>138</sup> Percy, *op cit*, p. 106

<sup>139</sup> See Raymond Williams, *ibid*

<sup>140</sup> David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980), p. 43



authority of the Father, Who speaks through the Spirit-filled prophet.

Although charismatic prophets are sociologically situated within postmodern pluralism, they are not a genuinely postmodern movement, since they are not at home in such pluralism. Like Conservative-Protestants, they want (and will probably fail) to re-erect a unified Christian sacred canopy.<sup>141</sup> Charismatic-Pentecostal experientialism is a “residual” attempt to reinforce rather than reimage conservative doctrine.<sup>142</sup> Only the Creational-Pagan model presents genuine emergent postmodern prophetism.

The people examined in this chapter illustrate how Charismatic-Pentecostal prophecy is shaped by both sociological processes and the mode of spiritual experience. Bill Hamon demonstrates charismatic routinisation and insitutionalisation, while Rick Joyner and Graham Cooke exemplify charismatic transmission through pietism, mysticism and symbolic prophecy.

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<sup>141</sup> See Steve Bruce, “The Charismatic Movement and the Secularization Thesis,” *Religion* (Vol. 28, No. 3, July 1998), p. 230

<sup>142</sup> See Raymond Williams, *ibid*



## 2. BILL HAMON: POWER RELIGION

### Latter Rain

Bill Hamon comes directly out of the Latter Rain Revival.<sup>143</sup> Soon after his conversion in 1950, he was told in 1953 during a Prophetic Presbytery that he had a prophetic anointing.<sup>144</sup> After pastoring a small Pentecostal Church in Washington State for six years,<sup>145</sup> he spent another three years as a travelling evangelist, during the Healing Revival which swept America during that decade.<sup>146</sup> He continued to be influenced by Latter Rain teachings through ongoing contact with the Revival Fellowship and attending the Crescent Beach conferences.<sup>147</sup> In 1964 he began teaching at a Bible College in Texas, but in 1969 he founded his own Christian International correspondence course, and later extension colleges. In 1976 Christian International moved to Arizona, and then in 1984 to Florida. Here it remains with an expanding campus construction programme.<sup>148</sup>

Hamon's *Message* reiterates Latter Rain Restorationism: God's plan is to restore the "*Eternal Church*", which is Christ's own "new earth body".<sup>149</sup> Because the Church suffered "deterioration" under Roman Catholic paganisation, God initiated a series of Restoration movements. These began with the Protestant Reformation which restored "justification", and continued with the Holiness movement restoring "sanctification", the Pentecostal movement restoring "Manifestations" and the Latter Rain movement restoring "Ministration". Each restoration involves another of the "Doctrines of Christ" (Hebrews 6.2 f) - repentance, faith, baptisms, and laying on of hands - leaving

<sup>143</sup> See Bill Hamon, *Prophets and Personal Prophecy. God's Prophetic Voice Today* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 1987), p. 1

<sup>144</sup> *ibid*, p. 3

<sup>145</sup> See Bill Hamon, *Prophets and the Prophetic Movement*, p. 67

<sup>146</sup> David Edwin Harrell Jr., *All Things Are Possible*

<sup>147</sup> See Hamon, *ibid*

<sup>148</sup> See Leon Walters, "The Making of a Prophet," in Hamon, *Prophets and the Prophetic Movement*, p. 3

<sup>149</sup> Bill Hamon, *The Eternal Church* (Phoenix, AR: Christian International Publishers, n.d.), p. 24



two, resurrection and eternal judgment, for future restoration movements.<sup>150</sup>

Although Hamon believes that the Healing Revival restored the “laying on of hands”, he claims that the Latter Rain re-introduced prophecy through laying on hands.<sup>151</sup> He also affirms the Latter Rain’s practice of the Prophetic Presbytery,<sup>152</sup> and the restoration of Christ’s “Ascension Gifts”, including “Prophet”.<sup>153</sup> Others also transmitted Latter Rain teaching on prophecy, such as David Blomgren,<sup>154</sup> who came from Dick Iverson’s Church in Oregon. Iverson popularised the term “Present Day Truth”. This referred not to new truth but to the restoration of ignored Biblical truths.<sup>155</sup> According to Hamon, the charismatic movement is an “expansion” of the Latter Rain, an opportunity for the rest of the Church, including the historic denominations, to “catch up” with previous restorations.<sup>156</sup> However, opposition would bring division,<sup>157</sup> and charismatics would remain behind in God’s plan unless they too embraced new truth and left their denominations.<sup>158</sup>

### Eschatology

Hamon’s Latter Rain eschatology challenges premillennialist pessimism. Rather than a gradual decline in the Church and world, there is to be an end-time revival conducted by a victorious Church.<sup>159</sup> Regarding the millennium, Hamon is post-millennial regarding the Church’s future reign, premillennial in foreseeing a literal 1000 years reign of the saints with Christ, and a-millennial in believing that Christians are already

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<sup>150</sup> *ibid*, pp. 158 ff

<sup>151</sup> *ibid*, pp. 249 ff

<sup>152</sup> *ibid*, p. 257

<sup>153</sup> *ibid*, p. 263

<sup>154</sup> See David Blomgren, *Prophetic Gatherings in the Church. The Laying of Hands and Prophecy* (Portland, OR: Bible Temple Publishing, 1979)

<sup>155</sup> See Dick Iverson, *Present Day Truths* (Portland, OR: Bible Press, 1975), quoted in Hamon, *ibid*, p. 197

<sup>156</sup> *ibid*, pp. 238 ff

<sup>157</sup> *ibid*, p. 228

<sup>158</sup> *ibid*, p. 274

<sup>159</sup> Hamon, *The Eternal Church*, p. 253, 256



reigning in heaven with Jesus now.<sup>160</sup> Although he refuses to “speculate” about the future,<sup>161</sup> he attacks the “escapism” of premillennialist rapture beliefs.<sup>162</sup>

Rather than a supernatural removal of Christians from the earth before the great tribulation under the antichrist, Hamon predicts “resurrection and translation”.<sup>163</sup> Dead Christians will be resurrected and the living “translated”, both undergoing “immortalization” and “glorification” to receive resurrection bodies. This will equip them to fulfil the “destination” of the restored Church,<sup>164</sup> which is to “conquer” the earth with Christ<sup>165</sup> as the “Army of the Lord”,<sup>166</sup> and physically establish the millennial kingdom ruling mortals, countries and continents.<sup>167</sup> Hamon’s over-realised eschatological literalism is deliberate, when he claims that this may be the “last living generation” which will receive immortalisation<sup>168</sup> and attacks those who interpret Biblical imagery in “abstract” terms.<sup>169</sup> Hamon still uses war-like rhetoric,<sup>170</sup> but he has exchanged his earlier replacement theology, which portrayed the Church as inheriting the scriptural promises to Israel,<sup>171</sup> for a recognition that Scriptural prophecy contains “dual” references.<sup>172</sup>

There is also a shift in emphasis from a “victorious Church” to a “victorious age”,<sup>173</sup> in which the millennium disappears from view altogether as the reign of the saints progresses into eternity. Hamon is influenced here by Earl Paulk’s “Kingdom Now”

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<sup>160</sup> *ibid*, p. 361

<sup>161</sup> *ibid*, p. 315

<sup>162</sup> *ibid*, p. 114

<sup>163</sup> *ibid*, pp. 337 f

<sup>164</sup> *ibid*, pp. 307 ff

<sup>165</sup> *ibid*, p. 350

<sup>166</sup> *ibid*, pp. 372 ff

<sup>167</sup> *ibid*, p. 380

<sup>168</sup> Hamon, *ibid*, p. 38

<sup>169</sup> *ibid*, p. 379

<sup>170</sup> See Bill Hamon, *Apostles, Prophets and the Coming Moves of God* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 1997)

<sup>171</sup> Hamon, *The Eternal Church*, p. 132

<sup>172</sup> Hamon, *Apostles, Prophets*, pp. 255 f

<sup>173</sup> Hugh Osgood, *Interview 2* (13.5.98)



thinking or dominion theology, which Hamon regards as a genuine restoration movement.<sup>174</sup> Although Paulk emphasises the “gradual process” of the Kingdom’s coming<sup>175</sup> where Hamon stresses crisis, both envisage the creation of parallel community structures which will draw non-believers to the Church.<sup>176</sup> Moreover, both foresee an important role for Prophets speaking to presidents<sup>177</sup> and governments,<sup>178</sup> and preparing Christ’s bride to “release” Him<sup>179</sup> and enable His return.<sup>180</sup>

### Christian Deviations?

Paulk and Hamon’s views resemble the 1950s Manifest Sons of God movement,<sup>181</sup> which taught that as Christ’s return draws closer, a select group of believers would accede to “sonship”, possessing miraculous powers and immortality.<sup>182</sup> Some consequently replaced the personal return of Christ with a figurative return in His glorified Body. There are echoes of this in Hamon’s teachings that the Church will become a “personification” of Jesus as He was of the Father,<sup>183</sup> that he and the Church are “one”,<sup>184</sup> and his claim that only a small number of overcomer Christians will participate in establishing the Kingdom.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> Hamon, *Prophets and the Prophetic Movement*, pp. 134 f

<sup>175</sup> Earl Paulk, *The Prophetic Community* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 1995), p. 2

<sup>176</sup> *ibid*, pp. 65 f; Hamon, *The Eternal Church*, pp. 288 f

<sup>177</sup> Hamon, *Apostles, Prophets*, p. 274

<sup>178</sup> Earl Paulk, *Offspring. The Generation the World is Waiting for* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 1996), p. 100

<sup>179</sup> Earl Paulk, *The Prophetic Community*, p. 59

<sup>180</sup> Earl Paulk, *Harvest Time* (June, 1984), p. 2; quoted in Dave Hunt & T. A. , *The Seduction of Christianity. Spiritual Discernment in the Last Days* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1987), p. 221

<sup>181</sup> See Mike Taylor’s unpublished PhD thesis, *Manifested Sonship: A Para-orthodox Charismatic Paradigm* (King’s College London) for a full account of this movement.

<sup>182</sup> See David Forbes, “From North Battlefield to Toronto,” in Clifford Hill, Peter Fenwick, David Forbes & David Forbes, *Blessing the Church?* ( Guildford: Eagle, 1996), pp. 83 ff

<sup>183</sup> Hamon, *The Eternal Church*, p. 336

<sup>184</sup> Hamon, *Apostles, Prophets*, p. 66

<sup>185</sup> *ibid*, p. 233



Hamon however denies being part of the movement.<sup>186</sup> He distinguishes between the “corporate” and “personal” body of Christ<sup>187</sup>. The victorious Church does not replace a “literal return” of Christ<sup>188</sup>. Moreover, immortalisation remains something to be realised immediately before the millennium, not now. Nevertheless, Hamon’s terminology has been influenced by sonship teaching. For example, DeVern Fromke also thought sonship involved “earthly dominion”;<sup>189</sup> and although sonship operates progressively at varying rates for different believers,<sup>190</sup> Fromke too hoped in 1964 that his might be the last “generation”.<sup>191</sup>

Another Christian deviation with which Hamon is associated are the “Jesus Only” or “Oneness” Pentecostals. They hold a modalistic view of the Trinity, which equates Jesus and the Father and sees the Spirit as an impersonal force. They are not automatically dismissed as heretical by Pentecostals, because they too speak in tongues. For Hamon as for William Branham, this raised dilemmas about cooperation.<sup>192</sup> However, although he himself is Trinitarian, Hamon observes that these doctrinal differences cannot be important because the Spirit baptises both.<sup>193</sup> Doctrine therefore is a matter of “personal conviction”, while a “personal relationship” with Jesus<sup>194</sup> and belief in His deity<sup>195</sup> becomes the basis of unity.

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<sup>186</sup> Bill Hamon, *God’s Prophetic Movement* (Video Tape) (Atlanta Regional Prophetic Conference, 1990)

<sup>187</sup> Hamon, *The Eternal Church*, p. 39

<sup>188</sup> *ibid*, p. 44

<sup>189</sup> DeVern Fromke, *Unto Full Stature* (Cloverdale, IN: Sure Foundation, 1964), p. 195

<sup>190</sup> See DeVern Fromke, *The Ultimate Intention* (Indianapolis, IN: Sure Foundation, 1963), pp. 141 ff

<sup>191</sup> *ibid*, p. 223

<sup>192</sup> See Harrell, *op cit*, p. 25

<sup>193</sup> Hamon, *The Eternal Church*, p. 230

<sup>194</sup> *ibid*, p. 262

<sup>195</sup> *ibid*, p. 99



## Prophecy

Following the pattern of the Latter Rain Hamon stresses “Personal Prophecy” through the “Presbytery”.<sup>196</sup> Here elders and prophets gather around selected candidates, discern their role in the Church, and “impart” spiritual gifts to them. Hamon distinguishes this personal prophecy from a “rhema” word which is communicated directly from God to the person with no prophetic intermediary,<sup>197</sup> but he distinguishes both from the “logos” word of Scripture which carries ultimate authority.<sup>198</sup> Prophecy, however, makes God more “personal and real” for the individual,<sup>199</sup> and as in the Apostolic Church it is possible to approach the prophet for guidance.<sup>200</sup> His words may also contain new direction, rather than merely a “confirmation” of previous guidance.<sup>201</sup> Nevertheless, Hamon recognises the danger of prophecy replacing individual responsibility to hear God,<sup>202</sup> perhaps leading to manipulation or “charismatic witchcraft”.<sup>203</sup>

Hamon particularly emphasises the restoration of the prophetic “office”,<sup>204</sup> for which the 1980s was the decisive decade.<sup>205</sup> Although he recognises the existence of prophets before then, he claims that a “restoration” implies a move from individual to corporate expression, and the ability to “reproduce”,<sup>206</sup> for example through training schools.<sup>207</sup> Hamon has led prophetic seminars and conferences since 1982,<sup>208</sup> and claims the “Prophetic Movement” was “birthed” at one of these in 1988.<sup>209</sup> He calls the

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<sup>196</sup> Hamon, *Prophets and Personal Prophecy*, pp. 54 ff

<sup>197</sup> *ibid*, p. 33

<sup>198</sup> *ibid*, p. 39

<sup>199</sup> *ibid*, p. 156

<sup>200</sup> *ibid*, p. 71

<sup>201</sup> *ibid*, p. 173

<sup>202</sup> *ibid*, p. 14

<sup>203</sup> *ibid*, pp. 160 f

<sup>204</sup> Hamon, *The Eternal Church*, p. 347

<sup>205</sup> Hamon, *Prophets and the Prophetic Movement*, p. 45

<sup>206</sup> *ibid*, p. 81

<sup>207</sup> *ibid*, p. 64

<sup>208</sup> Evelyn Hamon, “Preface,” in Hamon, *Prophets and Personal Prophecy*, p. 8

<sup>209</sup> Hamon, *Prophets and the Prophetic Movement*, pp. 96 f



charismatic movement to move on to the prophetic movement,<sup>210</sup> and even threatens pastors who oppose him that they will lose their congregations.<sup>211</sup>

Hamon maintains that such prophets should be able to speak God's "exact" words<sup>212</sup> and say "Thus saith the Lord"<sup>213</sup> in Latter Rain or Apostolic fashion, while charismatics prefer ordinary language. Hamon also sees prophetic office as a permanent possession not a temporary manifestation.<sup>214</sup> Even personal sin is not sufficient cause for God to withdraw the call.<sup>215</sup> Furthermore, although prophetic office relates to one's personal identity, Hamon opposes the identification of prophecy with right brain abilities or particular personality types.<sup>216</sup>

### **Routinisation and Institutionalisation**

Besides Hamon's supernaturalism, his *Manner* exhibits Weberian processes of routinisation and institutionalisation. The former is illustrated by Hamon's entire teaching ministry, and today his Ministry Training College offers an Associate Degree in Prophetic Ministry. In addition, although Apostolic churches pioneered tape-recording, Hamon welcomed the providential development of the cassette recorder just in time for the prophetic movement!<sup>217</sup> Institutionalisation is exhibited in the restoration of the prophetic office itself, and also in Hamon's ordination as Bishop in 1989 over CI-NPM (Christian International - Network of Prophetic Ministries).<sup>218</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> *ibid*, p. 42 f

<sup>211</sup> *ibid*, p. 65

<sup>212</sup> Hamon, *Prophets and Personal Prophecy*, p. 29

<sup>213</sup> Hamon, *Apostles, Prophets*, p. 123

<sup>214</sup> *ibid*, pp. 37 f

<sup>215</sup> Bill Hamon, *Prophets Pitfalls and Principles. God's Prophetic People Today* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 1991), pp. 76 f

<sup>216</sup> Hamon, *Prophets and the Prophetic Movement*, pp. 189 f

<sup>217</sup> Hamon, *Prophets and Personal Prophecy*, pp. 168 f

<sup>218</sup> Leon Walters, *op cit*, p. 6



Hamon has been criticised for accepting this title, and defends himself by pointing out that ‘Bishop’ is an administrative office, as opposed to the offices of apostle or prophet which were Christ’s ascension gifts to the Church.<sup>219</sup> However, there remained one further step in Hamon’s personal progression towards power - apostleship. And in 1994, he made himself an Apostle.<sup>220</sup> He is now at the crest of the new wave of what Peter Wagner calls the “New Apostolic Reformation”, or post-denominational Church.<sup>221</sup> Furthermore, as the apostolic function includes establishing doctrine, Hamon predicts there will be “Apostolic Church Councils” of all “present-truth” ministers to settle doctrinal teaching. This will be decided by revelations, the fruit of ministries, supernatural events, logos and rhema words, and unity among those present demonstrating the Spirit’s witness.<sup>222</sup>

Another sign of institutionalisation is the Church structure Hamon has created. In 1980, he wrote that the Latter Rain had not produced one new denomination.<sup>223</sup> He may now have created the first. Despite denials that it is a “denomination”, “Christian International - Network of Churches” performs the pastoral oversight and accountability functions of a sectarian denomination.<sup>224</sup> Moreover, Hamon has promoted his family as leaders. Tom Hamon pastors the local church, and Tim Hamon is President of the School of Theology and the Ministry Training College. This is typical of charismatic movements as they progress from first to second generation leadership. Hamon is securing his “fiefdom’s” continuity<sup>225</sup> through prophetic succession in a family dynasty modelled on a small business. This development will further the bureaucratisation of Christian International, although it is unclear whether rationalisation or revelation will predominate in the new authoritarian-sectarian “office

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<sup>219</sup> Hamon, *Apostles, Prophets*, pp. 177 f

<sup>220</sup> *ibid*, p. 59

<sup>221</sup> C. Peter Wagner, “Foreward,” in Hamon, *Apostles, Prophets*, p. xxii

<sup>222</sup> Hamon, *Apostles, Prophets*, p. 48

<sup>223</sup> Hamon, *The Eternal Church*, p. 263

<sup>224</sup> *Christian International Network of Churches* (Leaflet) (Santa Rosa, FL: CINC, n.d.)

<sup>225</sup> Roberts, *op cit*, p. 328



charisma”.<sup>226</sup>

## Networks

Networking is another institutional characteristic, which prophetic ministries share with other new religious movements. Michael York calls them “SPINs” (Segmented Polycentric Integrated Networks).<sup>227</sup> So although Hamon’s denomination is tightly controlled, most of his followers attend other Churches. In addition, there are informal personal links with other organisations. For example, Hamon’s publisher “Destiny Image” was founded by Don Nori, who received a Divine command to “publish the prophets”.<sup>228</sup>

Noel Woodroffe from Trinidad leads Elijah Ministries and World Breakthrough Network, and is also related to Hamon. Woodroffe also proclaims the restoration of prophetic Office, and is fascinated by structure and authority,<sup>229</sup> and is erecting an informal network, stretching in London to a group of black-led Churches around Ghanaian Pastor Ben Yeboah. Although Hamon has also established a British forward base in Sunderland led by Prophetess Sharon Stone, Woodroffe’s (and Yeboah’s) social orientation is different from Hamon’s. Woodroffe’s power language carries a different social message than it would in a white context. It encourages, empowers and overcomes the sense of “limitation” which prevails in the Caribbean and inner city.<sup>230</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, p. 1139

<sup>227</sup> Michael York, *The Emerging Network*, pp. 324 ff

<sup>228</sup> *Destiny Image Beginnings* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, n.d.)

<sup>229</sup> Noel Woodroffe, *Understanding God’s Prophetic Move Today* (Tunapuna, Trinidad: Elijah Ministries International Publishing, 1991), p. 121

<sup>230</sup> Noel Woodroffe, “Creating Apostolic Doctrine,” Talk at *The London Apostolic and Prophetic Conference* (Ilford, London: 19 th - 21 st September 1996)



Although Hamon's ministry attract blacks in the United States, it is not politically radical, but reflects the Religious Right's strategy of attracting the Afro-American middle classes.<sup>231</sup> He presents prophecy as a tool to help business people through the use of prophetic insights in decision-making.<sup>232</sup> The CI Business Network runs a School of Business and Government to help business people fulfil the Church's calling to exercise dominion over the world.<sup>233</sup> More generally, in a prophetic version of Kenneth Hagin's prosperity teaching, which he hails as another Restoration movement,<sup>234</sup> Hamon asserts that a personal relationship with a prophet can guarantee financial prosperity.<sup>235</sup> Faced with the possibility of recession in 1990 this dependency relationship exploited the fears and insecurity of lower middle class people.<sup>236</sup>

## Politics

Hamon does not draw on elite fractions of the bourgeoisie, but on "second level male elites", reinforcing patriarchal authority structures under threat from social change.<sup>237</sup> Hamon thus represents a kind of "status politics", defending the position of a "retrenching class".<sup>238</sup> When society is changing, submission to a paternalistic authoritarian "cult of personality" provides security.<sup>239</sup> Social insecurity also accounts for the infatuation with prophetic titles as a means of legitimation, and a compensation for, exclusion from the upper tiers.<sup>240</sup>

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<sup>231</sup> See Sara Diamond, *Facing the Wrath. Confronting the Right in Dangerous Times* (Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press, 1996), p. 93

<sup>232</sup> Hamon, *Prophets and Personal Prophecy*, p. 108

<sup>233</sup> Hamon, *Prophets and Personal Prophecy*, p. 106

<sup>234</sup> Hamon, *The Eternal Church*, p. 287

<sup>235</sup> Bill Hamon, "The Shunamite woman," *Covenant Partner* (Newsletter) (Santa Rosa, FL: Christian International, n.d.)

<sup>236</sup> Bill Hamon, *God's Prophetic Movement*

<sup>237</sup> cf. Steve Brouwer, Paul Gifford & Susan D. Rose, *Exporting the American Gospel. Global Christian Fundamentalism* (New York/London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 218 ff

<sup>238</sup> See Eugen Schoenfeld, "Militant and submissive Religions," , p. 119

<sup>239</sup> cf. Alister E. McGrath, "A Better Way: The Priesthood of all Believers," in Michael Scott Horton (Ed.), *Power Religion. The selling out of the evangelical church?* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1992), p. 306

<sup>240</sup> cf. Worsley, *op cit*, p. 249



Hamon's dominionism also illustrates the "power fetishism" of a threatened petty bourgeoisie excluded from the levers of political and economic power, and its willingness to submit to a strong leader.<sup>241</sup> Dominionism's aim is the revitalisation of the entire religio-cultural tradition of the United States. But this does not make Christian International a "civil religious sect".<sup>242</sup> It is rather a theocratic sect aiming at complete dominion by the Church over a country still conceived as a covenantal "christian nation".<sup>243</sup> Like other regressive attempts, they are likely to fail because of the increasing cultural pluralism, and to become subcultural by default.

Hamon's vocabulary of power<sup>244</sup> also illustrates prophecy's role in the geopolitics of American suzerainty. For example, the Philippines has often witnessed the religious reinforcement of American policy.<sup>245</sup> Hamon proudly relates his meeting with the President in 1992,<sup>246</sup> and Bill Perry, an associate of Hamon's, describes a vision of the Philippines poised like a sword pointing at Vietnam.<sup>247</sup> This manicheean language of spiritual warfare reflects superpower rivalry as passively observed by those powerless to affect it.<sup>248</sup> So while the Cold War witnessed Hamon's conversion during the Latter Rain, 'Star wars' heralded his apotheosis. Although he consistently opposed Communism's "devilish spirit",<sup>249</sup> America's unchallenged hegemony in the 1990s is reflected in Hamon's increasingly triumphalistic eschatological vision.

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<sup>241</sup> cf. Nicos Poulantzas, *Fascism and Dictatorship* (London: Verso, 1979), p. 252

<sup>242</sup> See Thomas Robbins & Dick Anthony, "Culture Crisis and Contemporary Religion," in Robbins & Anthony, *op cit*, p. 18

<sup>243</sup> Hamon, *The Eternal Church*, p. 178

<sup>244</sup> See Noam Chomsky, *Language and Politics* (Montreal/New York: Black Rose, 1988), p. 615

<sup>245</sup> See Brouwer et al, *op cit*, pp. 75 ff

<sup>246</sup> Hamon, *Apostles, Prophets*, p. 183

<sup>247</sup> Bill Perry, *A Prophetic Vision for the Philippines* (Atlanta, GEO: Harvest Publishing Co., 1992), pp. 31 ff

<sup>248</sup> Roberts, *op cit*, p. 278

<sup>249</sup> Hamon, *The Eternal Church*, p. 301



### 3. RICK JOYNER: RECOVERING PIETISM

#### History

Rick Joyner was converted in 1971 during the Jesus Movement.<sup>250</sup> Subsequently he became a Pastor in Raleigh, North Carolina, but although his Church grew Joyner became spiritually dry. He resigned in 1980 and started a business. Then in 1987, he began prophetic ministry, having established MorningStar Publications in 1985.<sup>251</sup> Although not a member of the Vineyard movement,<sup>252</sup> he worked alongside the Kansas City Prophets in 1989 as part of the “Prophetic Movement”.<sup>253</sup>

Joyner produces the Morning Star Prophetic Bulletin which publishes prophetic messages, and in 1991 he began the Morning Star Journal to provide reflective articles with “depth”.<sup>254</sup> In 1994 he formed the MorningStar Fellowship of Ministries, and the School of Ministry in 1995.<sup>255</sup> Despite his experience of pastoral failure, Joyner founded a new Church. This grew from 60 to over 600 in 1997.<sup>256</sup> In 1997 they began a move to the mountains at Moravian Falls to establish a “Prophetic Community”.<sup>257</sup>

Joyner’s *Message* is a modified restorationism. Typically he declared the 1980s as the decade for the restoration of the prophets,<sup>258</sup> to be followed by the restoration of apostles in the 1990s.<sup>259</sup> He still expects this,<sup>260</sup> because prophets only provide “knowledge,” whereas Apostles supply the “wisdom” needed to “build” the end-time

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<sup>250</sup> This was a Christian revival movement among young people; See Riss, *op cit*, pp. 148 ff

<sup>251</sup> See Rick Joyner, *The Harvest* (Springdale, PA: Whitaker House, 1989, 1993), pp. 7 f

<sup>252</sup> See Rick Joyner, *The Morning Star 1988-89* (Pineville, NC: MorningStar Publications, 1989), p. 100

<sup>253</sup> *ibid*, pp. 89 ff

<sup>254</sup> Rick Joyner, “A note from Rick,” *Morning Star Journal* (Vol. 2, No. 2, 1992), p. 97

<sup>255</sup> *The Morning Star Prophetic Bulletin* (November 1994), pp. 7 f

<sup>256</sup> John Holcombe, *Interview* (7.8.97)

<sup>257</sup> See Rick Joyner, *The Prophetic Ministry* (Charlotte, NC: MorningStar Publications, 1997), pp. 178 ff

<sup>258</sup> See Joyner, *The Morning Star*, pp. 24 f

<sup>259</sup> Joyner, *The Harvest*, pp. 47 ff

<sup>260</sup> Rick Joyner, “Restoring the Apostolic Foundation,” *Morning Star Journal* (Vol. 7, No. 3, 1997), pp. 73 ff; & “Restoring Apostolic Faith,” *Morning Star Journal* (Vol. 7, No. 4, 1997), pp. 62 ff



Church.<sup>261</sup> Apostolic proclamation of God's "Kingdom" as a present reality on the earth<sup>262</sup> would prepare the Bride-Church for Christ's return<sup>263</sup> and an outpouring of the Holy Spirit which would produce a large "Harvest".<sup>264</sup> Joyner still expects revival, although he is still awaiting the transition from Toronto blessing "renewal" to actual "revival".<sup>265</sup> The influence of Latter Rain and sonship teaching is evident, especially the latter as pieces by DeVern Fromke<sup>266</sup> and Bill Britton are printed in Joyner's *Journal*.<sup>267</sup>

Joyner also follows Restorationist eschatology in condemning the pre-tribulation "rapture" as a "retreat mentality".<sup>268</sup> Instead he wants to stir up the lukewarm "Laodicean" last days Church<sup>269</sup> to be ready for the "last battle which will come in this generation."<sup>270</sup> However, Steve Thompson (Vice-President of MorningStar) asserts that there is "no real emphasis" on eschatology at MorningStar,<sup>271</sup> and Joyner himself claims his eschatology derives more from visions than from reading.<sup>272</sup> In practice, he advocates unity between antagonistic positions on the rapture<sup>273</sup> and the place of Israel.<sup>274</sup> Joyner's expectation of a Middle East war led by the "former Soviet Union" against Israel,<sup>275</sup> however, owes more to Hal Lindsey<sup>276</sup> and his premillennialist

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<sup>261</sup> Rick Joyner, talk at *Passion For Jesus Conference* (19.6.97) (Kansas City, August 17-21 1997), which I attended.

<sup>262</sup> See Rick Joyner, "The Titanic and the Stock Market," in *The Harvest Trilogy* (Charlotte, NC: MorningStar Publications, 1989), p. 32

<sup>263</sup> *ibid*, p. 4

<sup>264</sup> *ibid*, p. 7

<sup>265</sup> See Rick Joyner, "A Bridge to Revival," *Morning Star Prophetic Bulletin* (January 1998), pp. 1 ff

<sup>266</sup> See DeVern Fromke, "The Vision of Full Stature," *Morning Star Journal* (Vol. 2, No. 2, 1992), pp. 1 ff; "Fitting the Living Stones Together," *Morning Star Journal* (Vol. 7, No. 2, 1997), pp. 14 ff; "Shining Forth Without Burning Out," *Morning Star Journal* (vol. 7, No. 3, 1997), pp. 16 ff

<sup>267</sup> See Bill Britton, "The Harness of the Lord," *Morning Star Journal* (Vol. 7, No. 3, 1997), pp. 52 ff

<sup>268</sup> Rick Joyner, *The Harvest*, pp. 200 ff

<sup>269</sup> See Joyner, *The Morning Star*, p. 54

<sup>270</sup> See Joyner, *The Final Quest*, p. 86

<sup>271</sup> Steve Thompson, *Interview* (11.8.97)

<sup>272</sup> See Joyner, *The Harvest*, p. 18 f

<sup>273</sup> See Joyner, *Epic Battles*, p. 11

<sup>274</sup> See Joyner, *The Harvest*, pp. 174 ff

<sup>275</sup> *ibid*, pp. 186 ff

<sup>276</sup> See Lindsey, *op cit*, p. 154



influence on the Jesus Movement than Restorationism proper.<sup>277</sup>

Joyner is clearly not typically Restorationist. His prophetic ministry has had two phases. In the first he expressed 1980s Restorationist triumphalism. Pastors were expected to disband their churches and follow the unstructured lead of the Spirit,<sup>278</sup> while those whose “control spirit” opposed change<sup>279</sup> would be removed from their positions.<sup>280</sup> Although Joyner still predicts “Civil War in the Church”,<sup>281</sup> his triumphalism has been tempered by the expectation of judgment on the Church,<sup>282</sup> prompted by the scandals involving Jim Bakker and Jimmy Swaggart in 1987 and 1988.<sup>283</sup> Joyner’s strong reaction may have been because Bakker’s base was in Charlotte, and indeed some personnel have moved from “Praise the Lord” (Bakker’s ministry) to MorningStar. But Joyner’s reflective mood was also probably affected by the Kansas City Prophets controversy. Predicting that the 90s would be a decade of “humility” as well as “power,” he saw an opportunity to turn away from “hype” back to a “personal relationship” with Jesus.<sup>284</sup>

This return to simplicity suggests another difference from pure Restorationism, deriving from Joyner’s roots not in the Latter Rain but the Jesus Movement. This suggests another influence on prophecy;<sup>285</sup> the change in generational style, from the 50s to the 70s, explains the contrast between the authoritarian Hamon and spiritualising Joyner. While Joyner welcomes the restoration of “offices,” he is unconcerned about “titles” although he recognises their usefulness.<sup>286</sup> Sociologically

<sup>277</sup> For Joyner’s expectations of the future, see his new book which came out too late to be included in the thesis: Rick Joyner, *A Prophetic Vision for the 21st Century* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999)

<sup>278</sup> *ibid*, p. 52

<sup>279</sup> Joyner, *The Harvest*, pp. 36 f

<sup>280</sup> See Joyner, “A Vision of the Harvest,” in *The Harvest Trilogy*, p. 8

<sup>281</sup> Rick Joyner, “Civil War in the church,” *Morning Star Prophetic Bulletin* (May 1996), pp. 1 ff

<sup>282</sup> See Joyner, *The Harvest*, pp. 65 ff

<sup>283</sup> See Joyner, *The Morning Star*, pp. 70 f

<sup>284</sup> *ibid*, pp. 73 ff

<sup>285</sup> Ray Stokes & Jim Stephens, *Interview* (8.2.96)

<sup>286</sup> Rick Joyner, talk at *Passion for Jesus* (20.8.97)



MorningStar differs from Christian International, and corresponds to Troeltsch's "third type" of mystical, individualistic "spiritual religion" in contrast to the structured sect.<sup>287</sup>

### **Mysticism**

This difference suggests that the "transmission of charisma"<sup>288</sup> may counter Weber's processes of routinisation and institutionalisation. These do occur in MorningStar. For example, the practice of queuing for personal prophecies from the prophetic team after Church services exhibits both routinisation of process and the institutionalisation of personnel, although still giving some an opportunity for significant participation. Two aspects of Joyner's *Manner* however provide countervailing forces - mysticism and pietism. Joyner opposes "methodology" in spiritual work,<sup>289</sup> which he sees as an "industrial age disease" of wanting a "formula"<sup>290</sup> instead of following the "simplicity of devotion to Christ". True prophecy is therefore about intimacy with Jesus, not primarily doctrines or Church structures.<sup>291</sup>

Consequently, Christian unity does not come from political organisation<sup>292</sup> or doctrinal agreement, but from Christ Himself.<sup>293</sup> Effectively Joyner has a spiritual concept of the "invisible church"<sup>294</sup> rather than a structural one. He criticises the "religious spirit" in mainline Churches for opposing the Holy Spirit;<sup>295</sup> and attacks "idealism" as an expression of fleshly pride and justification by works.<sup>296</sup> Joyner embodies an extreme Protestant spiritualising tendency, a typical Weberian contrast between charisma and

<sup>287</sup> See Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches* (London: George Allen & Unwin/New York: Macmillan, 1931), Volume I, p. 381, & Volume II, pp. 743 ff

<sup>288</sup> See Michael Hill, *op cit*, p. 174

<sup>289</sup> *ibid*, p. 12

<sup>290</sup> Joyner, *The Harvest*, p. 14

<sup>291</sup> Rick Joyner, *There were Two Trees in the Garden* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 1993[1986]), p. 160

<sup>292</sup> See Joyner, *The Harvest*, p. 61

<sup>293</sup> See Joyner, *There were Two Trees*, p. 50

<sup>294</sup> Joyner, *The Harvest*, p. 131

<sup>295</sup> See Joyner, *Epic Battles*, pp. 120 ff

<sup>296</sup> *ibid*, p. 127



organisation.<sup>297</sup> Theologically, although he elevates “spirit” over “mind,”<sup>298</sup> and quotes Kierkegaard,<sup>299</sup> Joyner represents conservative pietism not Schleiermacherian liberalism.

The prophet, according to Joyner, will have “uncommon and extraordinary experiences”,<sup>300</sup> similar to classical mystical experiences.<sup>301</sup> These exhibit various “levels”:

1. “impressions”;
2. visions in the mind;
3. “open visions” which appear physical ;
4. trances;
5. the “audible voice” of the Lord;
6. angels;
7. Christ’s presence.<sup>302</sup>

Joyner even claims to have visited the “third heaven” like Paul.<sup>303</sup> Prophets risk rejection because of the strangeness of these experiences,<sup>304</sup> but Joyner carefully distances himself from the New Age, although he avers that it has arisen because of a “hunger for the supernatural”.<sup>305</sup> His combination of mystical experience and personal humility constitutes a recognisable *genre* - the *American seer tradition* - which

William Branham<sup>306</sup> and Paul Cain<sup>307</sup> also illustrate.

<sup>297</sup> See Weber, *Economy and Society*, p. 1119

<sup>298</sup> See Rick Joyner, “Preparation for Ministry. Essentials for Discerning Biblical Truth,” *Morning Star Journal* (Vol. 1, No. 3, 1991), pp. 43 ff

<sup>299</sup> See Rick Joyner, “Holiness,” *Morning Star Journal* (Vol. 7, No. 3, 1997), p. 7

<sup>300</sup> Joyner, *The Morning Star*, pp. 55

<sup>301</sup> cf. Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism. A study in the nature and development of man’s spiritual consciousness* (London: Methuen & Co., 1911), pp. 319 ff

<sup>302</sup> Joyner, *The Prophetic Ministry*, pp. 117 ff

<sup>303</sup> Joyner, *The Final Quest*, pp. 44 f

<sup>304</sup> See Joyner, *The Prophetic Ministry*, p. 78

<sup>305</sup> Joyner, *Epic Battles*, p. 96

<sup>306</sup> See Harrell, *op cit*, pp. 29 ff

<sup>307</sup> See Pytches, *Some Said It Thundered*, pp. 18 ff



## Pietism

The pietist strain is shown by Joyner's insistence that the prophet is primarily "God's friend".<sup>308</sup> While Joyner believes in Biblical authority, he claims that a personal relationship with Christ, involving prophecy, is needed to cover situations where Scripture is silent.<sup>309</sup> He acknowledges the pietist influence explicitly in a valuation of history rare for Restorationists emphasising the present move of God.<sup>310</sup> Furthermore MorningStar's move to Moravian Falls is prompted by its historical association with Zinzendorff.<sup>311</sup> Because of Zinzendorff's heritage, claims Joyner, the area possesses "open heavens" which permit more revelation.<sup>312</sup>

Pietism also explains MorningStar's asceticism, in which they deny otherwise neutral "comforts" in order to pursue the spiritual life.<sup>313</sup> Although this contains potential countercultural resources, it risks becoming a docetic spirituality over-concentrating on the otherworldly, and with a similarly docetic Christology.<sup>314</sup> There are also hints of platonic dualism in Joyner's view that what our spiritual eyes see is "more real" than the physical.<sup>315</sup> Joyner's platonic heaven resembles C. S. Lewis's,<sup>316</sup> although Joyner stresses that his account is not allegory but a vision,<sup>317</sup> the opposite of Lewis's claim.<sup>318</sup>

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<sup>308</sup> Joyner, *The Prophetic Ministry*, p. 43

<sup>309</sup> *ibid*, p. 63

<sup>310</sup> Rick Joyner, *Three Witnesses* (Charlotte, NC: MorningStar Publications, 1997)

<sup>311</sup> Joyner, *The Prophetic Ministry*, pp. 180 ff

<sup>312</sup> Rick Joyner, sermon at *Morning Star Fellowship* (10.8.97), which I attended.

<sup>313</sup> Joyner, *There were Two Trees*, pp. 92 ff

<sup>314</sup> *ibid*, p. 59

<sup>315</sup> Joyner, *The Final Quest*, p. 42

<sup>316</sup> cf. C. S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce* (Glasgow: Fontana, 1972[1946]), p. 40

<sup>317</sup> See Joyner, *The Final Quest*, p. 14

<sup>318</sup> See Lewis, *op cit*, p. 9



MorningStar's pietistic asceticism and prophetic fervour help its lower middle class membership<sup>319</sup> to advance.<sup>320</sup> Firstly, MorningStar provides a motivator for, and mitigator of, the dislocation caused by increased geographical mobility. Charlotte is one of the fastest-growing cities in the United States.<sup>321</sup> People move there to find jobs in the growing New South economy,<sup>322</sup> but some come specifically to join MorningStar. MorningStar's combination of "sectarian" and "localist" sub-plausibility structures<sup>323</sup> cushions the anomic experience of relocation,<sup>324</sup> and prophecy provides guidance for those cut off from communal and family-based support networks. MorningStar therefore addresses the insecurities of the petty bourgeoisie, and its support for inner city ministries, owes as much to suburban fears of social collapse among the urban underclass,<sup>325</sup> as genuine compassion.<sup>326</sup>

Secondly, fears of economic collapse are reflected in Joyner's predictions of recession and a stock market crash in the 1990s,<sup>327</sup> which Joyner still expects.<sup>328</sup> Informed by his own business experience, Joyner's economic ideology concentrates on the problems of small businesses, such as debt.<sup>329</sup> His preference for self-publishing comes from his resentment at publishers making more profit than authors.<sup>330</sup> The goal of "Christian Economics"<sup>331</sup> is the middle class ideal - "financial independence".<sup>332</sup> The way to attain

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<sup>319</sup> Holcombe, *Interview*

<sup>320</sup> cf. Benton Johnson, "Do Holiness Sects Socialize in Dominant Values?" *Social Forces* (May 1961), pp. 309 ff

<sup>321</sup> See *Charlotte Region. America's New Business Horizon* (leaflet) (Charlotte, NC: The Carolinas Partnership, n.d.)

<sup>322</sup> See Enzo Mingione, *Social Conflict and the City* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), pp. 48 f

<sup>323</sup> McGuire, *op cit*, pp. 38 ff

<sup>324</sup> cf. Brouwer et al, *op cit*, p. 181

<sup>325</sup> cf. Mingione, *op cit*, p. 30

<sup>326</sup> See Joyner, *The Harvest II*, p. 137

<sup>327</sup> See Joyner, "The Titanic and the Stock Market," pp. 17 ff

<sup>328</sup> See Rick Joyner, *The Surpassing Greatness of His Power* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 1996), p. 12

<sup>329</sup> See Rick Joyner, *Leadership and Management and the Five Essentials for Success* (Charlotte, NC: MorningStar Publications, 1995[1990]), p. 37

<sup>330</sup> Rick Compton, *Interview* (11.8.97)

<sup>331</sup> Joyner, *The Harvest II*, p. 42

<sup>332</sup> Rick Joyner, *Overcoming the Spirit of Poverty* (Charlotte, NC: MorningStar Publications, 1996), p. 6



it is “stewardship”<sup>333</sup> including “tithing” to Christian causes.<sup>334</sup> This neo-weberian work ethic appeals to the lower middle classes resettling in the New South. It will therefore have temporary appeal until people settle, and offer only short-term support to MorningStar’s current growth.<sup>335</sup> Moreover, although Joyner’s faith expresses ascetic pietism, in his case other-worldly mysticism wars with this-worldly asceticism<sup>336</sup> as he continually seeks to escape from the world to spend more time alone with God.<sup>337</sup>

### Politics

Although most of Joyner’s prophecies are visionary, he has attempted to interpret “sociological shifts” in the “Signs of the Times”.<sup>338</sup> For example, he describes the increasing power of economics represented by the “Beast” in *Revelation*.<sup>339</sup> Unusually among charismatic prophets, Joyner calls for justice for the “poor” and “foreigners,”<sup>340</sup> accentuating issues such as women’s rights, racism and “exploitation”.<sup>341</sup> He especially opposes racism because of his antipathy towards anti-semitism<sup>342</sup> and his perception of America’s unique calling as a racially diverse nation.<sup>343</sup> Joyner’s lieutenant, Steve Thompson, has transformed this charitable concern for the poor<sup>344</sup> into a criticism of the “cultural idols” infiltrating the church.<sup>345</sup>

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<sup>333</sup> *ibid*, p. 19

<sup>334</sup> *ibid*, pp. 40 f

<sup>335</sup> See Hunter, *American Evangelicalism*, p. 131

<sup>336</sup> See Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, pp. 166 f

<sup>337</sup> *ibid*, p. 174

<sup>338</sup> Joyner, *The Harvest II*, pp. 35 f

<sup>339</sup> *ibid*, p. 31; & see *Revelation 13.1 ff*

<sup>340</sup> Joyner, *The Harvest II*, pp. 191 f

<sup>341</sup> Joyner, *The Final Quest*, p. 37

<sup>342</sup> See Joyner, *The Harvest*, p. 188

<sup>343</sup> See Rick Joyner, *Overcoming Racism* (Charlotte, NC: MorningStar Publications, 1997), p. 18

<sup>344</sup> See Bob Jones, Rick Joyner, Bobby Conner & Steve Thompson, “The Coming Satanic Onslaught. A Prophetic Forum,” *Morning Star Journal* (Vol. 7, No. 2, 1997), p. 45

<sup>345</sup> Steve Thompson, “Don’t Be Deceived,” *Morning Star Journal* (Vol. 7, No. 3, 1997), p. 40



Joyner's "radical pietism"<sup>346</sup> however restricts social concern to an extreme Protestant individualism, which opposes any corporate social role for the Church. This is likely to limit MorningStar's political impact. For example, he argues that if the Church as an institution initiated projects in the inner city, it would "prevent the anointing" which only comes when individuals act with God-given vision.<sup>347</sup> Similarly, Joyner shares the populist petty bourgeois distrust of politics. Democracy is too slow and inefficient,<sup>348</sup> and needs to be "speeded up" to give space for real leaders, who feel impatient with legislative politics.<sup>349</sup> Joyner is not authoritarian however. Drawing on the precedent of Nazi Germany, he has warned of the danger of fascism on the American political right.<sup>350</sup>

He opposes the use of "carnal power" by the Church and the provision of "welfare" by the state, which depersonalises and institutionalises the recipients and is inefficient.<sup>351</sup> Whilst he acknowledges that political liberals may be real Christians, he thinks that their approaches to poverty are "socialist delusions."<sup>352</sup> Joyner stresses a Lutheran-style "two mandates" position, which distinguishes the functions of government and Church, operating in the different spheres of "law" and "spirit",<sup>353</sup> with the Church possessing the "higher calling," to preach the gospel.<sup>354</sup>

Nevertheless, Joyner did publish Paul Cain's dream predicting Clinton's 1992 election victory. They welcomed him as God's choice, and criticised the ideological attacks on him by conservative Christians.<sup>355</sup> Joyner also criticised the use of violence by

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<sup>346</sup> Peter C. Erb, "Introduction," in (Ed.) *The Pietists. Selected Writings* (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), p. 15

<sup>347</sup> Joyner, talk at Passion for Jesus (19.8.97)

<sup>348</sup> See Joyner, *Leadership and Management*, p. 40

<sup>349</sup> *ibid*, p. 78

<sup>350</sup> See Paul Cain & Rick Joyner, "The Clinton Administration, Its meaning and Our Future," *Morning Star Prophetic Bulletin* (January, 1993), p. 6

<sup>351</sup> See Joyner, *The Harvest II*, p. 141

<sup>352</sup> Joyner, *Epic Battles*, pp. 203 f

<sup>353</sup> See Joyner, *Epic Battles*, p. 182

<sup>354</sup> Joyner, "The Clinton Administration," p. 5

<sup>355</sup> See Cain & Joyner, *op cit*, p. 1 ff



Religious Right “extremists” against abortion clinics.<sup>356</sup> In fact, since the Republicans reneged on promises concerning abortion, he began to think that Government was now powerless to effect change, so that only a spiritual revival could end abortion.<sup>357</sup> In addition, while Joyner opposed government control of the economy,<sup>358</sup> and welcomed Reagan’s welfare reforms<sup>359</sup> and tax law changes,<sup>360</sup> in practice he felt that these had been pushed through too quickly for people to adjust.

### Withdrawal

Sara Diamond writes that there has been a widespread disillusionment on the part of religious “paleoconservatives” with the Republicans.<sup>361</sup> While some have gone further right, others have withdrawn from politics<sup>362</sup> because of their failed millennial hopes.<sup>363</sup> The quietism of the latter maintains hope, but directs it toward a wholly spiritual millennialist revival.<sup>364</sup> This gives groups like Joyner’s a political stance that is both “oppositional” and “system-supportive”.<sup>365</sup> But their “submissive” attitude to political power is mirrored by submission to a charismatic leader such as Joyner.<sup>366</sup> The main social stratification in a prophetic group is after all that between prophet and people.<sup>367</sup>

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<sup>356</sup> See Rick Joyner, “Christians and Politics,” *Morning Star Prophetic Bulletin* (April 1993), p. 1

<sup>357</sup> *ibid*, p. 3

<sup>358</sup> See Joyner, *Leadership and Management*, p. 79

<sup>359</sup> See Joyner, *The Surpassing Greatness of His Power*, p. 13

<sup>360</sup> Rick Joyner, “Election ‘94 and the Waves of Change,” *Morning Star Prophetic Bulletin* (November 1994), pp. 4 f

<sup>361</sup> Sara Diamond, *Roads to Dominion*, p. 74

<sup>362</sup> See James M. Penning & Corwin Smidt, “What Coalition? Divisions in the Christian Right,” *The Christian Century* (January 15 1997), p. 37

<sup>363</sup> See Mannheim, *op cit*, p. 213

<sup>364</sup> *ibid*, p. 195

<sup>365</sup> Diamond, *op cit*, p. 6

<sup>366</sup> Eugen Schoenfeld, “Militant and submissive religions: class, religion and ideology,” p. 136

<sup>367</sup> See R. L. Johnstone, *Religion and Society in Transition* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc., 1975), p. 215



Currently the greatest danger facing Joyner is that this quietism could lead to cult formation, as with several groups developing from the Jesus Movement.<sup>368</sup> One of the main ingredients is already present - the charismatic leader.<sup>369</sup> Joyner is apparently humble and perhaps aware of the danger.<sup>370</sup> Although others have visions, however, Joyner is clearly MorningStar's primary visionary.

Moreover, although over-dependency on prophecy is discouraged, two structural factors encourage dependency. Firstly, as more people work for the ministry they owe their livelihoods to it. Secondly, the general geographical relocation inhibits other communal relationships, and this will be accentuated by the impending move to Moravian Falls. Although many will remain in Charlotte, there will be increasing geographical "isolation".<sup>371</sup> A future indicator will be whether Joyner declares himself an apostle, thereby contradicting his erstwhile free-spirit approach. This however may only indicate MorningStar's transformation into an authoritarian sect, like Hamon's Christian International, rather than a mystical cult.<sup>372</sup>

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<sup>368</sup> See Ronald Enroth, *Youth, Brainwashing, and the Extremist Cults* (Kentwood, MICH: Zondervan, 1977)

<sup>369</sup> See Eileen Barker, *New Religious Movements. A Practical Introduction* (London: HMSO, 1992), pp. 13 f

<sup>370</sup> See Rick Joyner, "What is a Cult?" *The Morning Star Prophetic Bulletin* (April 1998), p. 8

<sup>371</sup> See Barker, *op cit*, pp. 79 ff

<sup>372</sup> See J. Milton Yinger, *The Scientific Study of Religion* (New York: Macmillan/London: Collier MacMillan, 1970), pp. 279 ff, for the sociological distinction between sect and cult.



#### 4. GRAHAM COOKE: MYSTICISM AND SYMBOLISM

##### Restorationism

Graham Cooke has lived in Southampton, England, since 1972. In 1974, he received prophecies that he would have a prophetic ministry.<sup>373</sup> Eventually in 1986, Cooke began teaching a School of Prophecy. During this time, he was a member of City Gates Church which was part of Gerald Coates' Pioneer network. In 1990, the school became a recognised "*Pioneer School of Prophecy*".<sup>374</sup> As Cooke's ministry grew, he formed United Christian Ministries, which conducts a wider range of leadership training.<sup>375</sup> In 1995, he joined the Southampton Community Church which is part of the Cornerstone network led by Tony Morton.

Despite rumours of splits in the City Gates Church, Martin Scott of Pioneer says that the parting was "amicable".<sup>376</sup> Nevertheless, it occurred after a history of tension between the two networks in Southampton.<sup>377</sup> Both, however, are Restorationist groups, and Restorationism provides the framework for Cooke's prophetism. He refers approvingly to Noel Woodroffe,<sup>378</sup> Bill Hamon and Graham Perrins,<sup>379</sup> who was influenced by the Apostolic Church.<sup>380</sup>

Morton has been in the background of British Restorationism, but possibly with Cooke's accession, he may return to the limelight. Although Andrew Walker suggests that Restoration has been "domesticated",<sup>381</sup> abandoning doctrinal distinctives and

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<sup>373</sup> Graham Cooke, *Interview* (12.9.96)

<sup>374</sup> *Developing Your Prophetic Gifting. Pioneer School of Prophecy* (Audio Tape Set) (Southampton: Pioneer, n.d.)

<sup>375</sup> See *Training Information Pack* (Southampton: United Christian Ministries, n.d.)

<sup>376</sup> Martin Scott, *Interview* (11.7.96)

<sup>377</sup> See Walker, *Restoring the Kingdom*, p. 282

<sup>378</sup> Graham Cooke, *Developing Your Prophetic Gifting* (Tonbridge: Sovereign World, 1994), p. 54

<sup>379</sup> Cooke, *Interview*

<sup>380</sup> See Peter Hocken, "The Prophetic Ministry of Graham Perrins," *Renewal* (No. 226, March 1995), p. 36

<sup>381</sup> Walker, *op cit*, p. 23



hopes for social transformation, he recognises this charge may be premature in Morton's case.<sup>382</sup> Morton still refers to the restoration of offices and end-times revival.<sup>383</sup> His attitude to eschatology is open, but he settles for a gradual growth of the Kingdom until Jesus returns.<sup>384</sup> Eschatology appears relatively unimportant to Cooke, although his forthcoming book, *The Church in Transition*, may reveal his views on this this.<sup>385</sup>

## Prophets

Cooke actively sought to make himself "accountable" to an apostle, namely Tony Morton.<sup>386</sup> Cooke's submissiveness distinguishes him from other Charismatic-Pentecostal prophets. Although he has set up his own ministry, he has not (yet) founded his own Church. While believing that God is restoring the prophetic office,<sup>387</sup> he does not believe that prophets have a governmental role in Church.<sup>388</sup> Instead he repeats Restorationism's emphasis on leadership "teams",<sup>389</sup> with prophets relating to apostles<sup>390</sup> and teachers. The latter differ from prophets, because while prophets communicate "progressive truth" by revelation, teachers communicate "revealed truth" from Scripture.<sup>391</sup> Discerning "present truth"<sup>392</sup> the prophet is able to uncover "new doctrine and practices"<sup>393</sup> which the teacher then relates systematically.

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<sup>382</sup> See *ibid*, pp. 404 f, n. 62

<sup>383</sup> Tony Morton, "So what is God saying to the British Church?" 15.3.97), talk at *Raising the Standard Conference* (Southampton, 12 - 15 March 1997)

<sup>384</sup> See Tony Morton, *Developing Prophets and Prophecy in the Local Church* (Southampton: Cornerstone Resources, 1992), pp. 120 ff

<sup>385</sup> See *United Christian Ministries Newsletter* (Summer/Autumn 1997), p. 8

<sup>386</sup> Cooke, *Interview*

<sup>387</sup> See Cooke, *Developing Your Prophetic Gifting*, pp. 191 ff

<sup>388</sup> Graham Cooke, "Guidelines for Handling Prophecy," *School of Prophecy Session 3* (9.1.97) (St. Marks' Church, Kennington, London), which I attended.

<sup>389</sup> Walker, *op cit*, p. 155

<sup>390</sup> Graham Cooke, "Interaction between Prophets and other Ministries" (14.3.97), talk at *Raising the Standard Conference*

<sup>391</sup> Cooke, "Interaction between Prophets and other Ministries"

<sup>392</sup> Cooke, *Developing Your Prophetic Gifting*, p. 286

<sup>393</sup> *ibid*, p. 40



Coinciding with the notion of *Message*, Cooke also believes that prophets have different “life messages”.<sup>394</sup> Prophets thereby concentrate on particular spheres of ministry, whether evangelism, pastoring, prediction or the word of knowledge.<sup>395</sup> Drawing on his own experience of management training, Cooke describes his own *Message* as “training and development”,<sup>396</sup> that is equipping others to prophesy. This also explains his assertion that prophets have a “building” role in local Churches, contributing to long-term development.<sup>397</sup> He sees this as the New Testament prophetic model, in contrast to the Old Testament “blessing” ministry.<sup>398</sup>

In particular, the prophet helps the Church: firstly by discerning new truth, he enables the Church to cooperate with the “next move of God”,<sup>399</sup> secondly, he equips the Church for spiritual warfare by identifying evil spirits.<sup>400</sup> In anthropological terms, the prophet invokes a theodicy which reduces problems to “symbolic entities” which can be overcome through prayer.<sup>401</sup> Morton also supports the prophet’s role in revealing “present strategies” to the Church.<sup>402</sup> Morton though supports “enquiring” for guidance from a prophet,<sup>403</sup> while Cooke condemns it as an Old Testament practice which interferes with the individual’s own ability to hear from God.<sup>404</sup> In practice however, Cooke still provides prophetic ministry at conferences.

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<sup>394</sup> Cooke, *Interview*

<sup>395</sup> See Cooke, *Developing Your Prophetic Gifting*, p. 196

<sup>396</sup> Cooke, *Interview*

<sup>397</sup> Cooke, *Developing Your Prophetic Gifting*, p. 77

<sup>398</sup> *ibid*, p. 200

<sup>399</sup> Cooke, *Interview*

<sup>400</sup> See Cooke, *Developing Your Prophetic gifting*, P. 45 f

<sup>401</sup> See John Beattie, *Other Cultures. Aims, Methods and Achievements in Social Anthropology* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), p. 239

<sup>402</sup> Morton, *Developing Prophets and Prophecy in the local church*, pp. 33 f

<sup>403</sup> *ibid*, pp. 110 ff

<sup>404</sup> See Cooke, *Developing Your Prophetic Gifting*, pp. 198 f



## Routinisation

Cooke's *Manner* shows signs of routinisation, with tape recorded prophecies to avoid future misunderstandings.<sup>405</sup> He also used an appointments system for personal prophecy during the *Raising the Standard* Conference in 1997, to cope with the large numbers.<sup>406</sup> This is also an application of the Latter Rain "Prophetic Presbytery".<sup>407</sup> Likewise, the common practice of teaching prophecy through workshop techniques displays routinisation, as well as echoing the value the culture places on education and experiential learning. So accepted is prophecy, that Cooke has trained members of the youth congregation ("Sublime"<sup>408</sup>) in prophetic ministry to their peers.<sup>409</sup>

Most prophetic workshops concentrate on developing spontaneous insights. Cooke though, while claiming that prophecy comes through the "spirit" not the mind",<sup>410</sup> accepts both "spontaneous" and "rehearsed" approaches.<sup>411</sup> He wants to "improve the Sunday model",<sup>412</sup> and his workshop technique consists of people writing down and refining their intuitions about other people.<sup>413</sup> This *literisation* of charismatic prophecy is paralleled by Joyner's written visionary accounts. A dilemma they face is that where written prophecies are circulated, the question of "authority" vis-a-vis Scripture will be raised, since printing lends credibility.<sup>414</sup>

Another area of routinisation is the development of prophetic "protocols".<sup>415</sup> While these have been introduced to protect people against manipulation, they also restrict spontaneous speech. For example, Cooke suggests that prophets not utter the first

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<sup>405</sup> See *ibid*, p. 89

<sup>406</sup> Graham Cooke, "Guidelines for Handling Prophecy"

<sup>407</sup> See Cooke, *Developing Your Prophetic Gifting*, pp. 112 f

<sup>408</sup> I visited *Sublime* (31.5.97)

<sup>409</sup> Brian Kennedy, *Interview* (16.6.97)

<sup>410</sup> Cooke, *Developing Your Prophetic Gifting*, p. 81

<sup>411</sup> *ibid*, p. 99

<sup>412</sup> Graham Cooke, "What Prophetic People are looking for," *School of Prophecy Session 9* (3.7.97)

<sup>413</sup> Graham Cooke, "Prophetic Workshop A," *School of Prophecy Session 4* (13.2.97)

<sup>414</sup> See Cecil M. Robeck, "Written Prophecies: A Question of Authority," *Pneuma* (Vol. 2, No. 2, Fall 1980), pp. 26 ff

<sup>415</sup> Cooke, *Interview*



words they receive, since these may only be a word of knowledge revealing the “diagnosis” of a situation. Instead, by internally questioning God, one might arrive at the “prognosis”.<sup>416</sup> He also juxtaposes “personal prophecy” which he supports, with “private prophecy” given in secret, which can become manipulative.<sup>417</sup> Prophecy is also divided by Cooke into “inspirational” and “revelational” prophecy.<sup>418</sup> The former is non -directive, and may be delivered by anyone. The latter can be corrective and directive, and as a more serious manifestation, it ought to be the preserve of someone in the “office” of prophet.

Even a prophet, however, should submit corrective prophecies to Church leaders first.<sup>419</sup> Cooke says this gives prophecy “endorsement”,<sup>420</sup> but it also muzzles criticism. He also defends “platform control” as a procedure for controlling who delivers prophecies in meetings.<sup>421</sup> And although Cooke does not insist on the “Thus saith the Lord” prefix, this comes as much from his suburban informality as from personal humility. Cooke’s relaxed style has nevertheless caused suspicions among Pentecostals concerning his prophetic call.<sup>422</sup>

### **Charismatic Transmission**

Cooke’s *Manner* also illustrates pietism’s contribution to countering routinisation.<sup>423</sup> Morton defines a prophet as one who points to Jesus,<sup>424</sup> and Cooke sees “intimacy” with Him as one of the current “waves” of the Spirit.<sup>425</sup> There is also the development of mysticism. At Cooke’s 1997 *Raising the Standard* Conference, John Paul Jackson

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<sup>416</sup> Cooke, *Developing Your Prophetic Gifting*, p. 70

<sup>417</sup> *ibid*, p. 90 f

<sup>418</sup> *ibid*, p. 91

<sup>419</sup> Cooke, *Developing Your Prophetic Gifting*, p. 33

<sup>420</sup> Graham Cooke, “Guidelines for Handling Prophecy”

<sup>421</sup> Cooke, *Interview*

<sup>422</sup> See Cooke, *Developing Your Prophetic Gifting*, p. 185

<sup>423</sup> See Ken McGreavy, *Understanding the Prophetic* (Audio Tape Series) (London: Ichthus Media Services, n.d.)

<sup>424</sup> Morton, *Developing Prophets and Prophecy*, p. 86

<sup>425</sup> Cooke, *Interview*



(one of the original Kansas City Prophets) represented the American seer tradition complete with paranormal experiences (e.g. lights on the ceiling). Cooke also shares this view of the prophet as one who moves in the “supernatural realm”.<sup>426</sup> Moreover, influenced by the Toronto blessing, he yearns for the visible “manifest presence” of God, a permanent “dwelling” not merely a temporary “visitation”.<sup>427</sup>

But Cooke introduces a fresh mystical element<sup>428</sup> - the “silence” of God. God is usually silent, and so the prophet needs to learn to listen.<sup>429</sup> Therefore Cooke stresses the “hiddenness” of time alone with God.<sup>430</sup> He advocates “meditation” to still oneself, although many charismatics identify meditation with eastern religion.<sup>431</sup> He emphasises that prophecy is a gift, which does not “belong” to anyone.<sup>432</sup> Dependence on the Holy Spirit therefore means that the “anointing” is not always available, and Cooke warns against the “pressure” of meeting expectations.<sup>433</sup>

Cooke also writes that it takes 15 - 20 years for God to prepare someone to be a prophet.<sup>434</sup> This sanctification process involves suffering, as the Cross works to kill our flesh.<sup>435</sup> But because the purpose is Christ-like transformation, the prophet has to “kiss the hand that hurts”.<sup>436</sup> Cooke’s now welcomes even his critics, who accused him of being demonic, as contributing toward his “character formation”.<sup>437</sup> He writes that we must “humble ourselves” or we will “get humiliated”.<sup>438</sup> Cooke’s stress on

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<sup>426</sup> Cooke, *Developing Your Prophetic Gifting*, p. 194

<sup>427</sup> Graham Cooke, “The Indwelling Presence,” *United Christian Ministries Newsletter* (Spring 1997), pp. 1 ff

<sup>428</sup> cf. Underhill, *op cit*, pp. 453 ff

<sup>429</sup> Graham Cooke, “Back to the Future” (12.3.97), *Raising the Standard*

<sup>430</sup> Cooke, “First Steps in Prophecy”

<sup>431</sup> See Cooke *Developing Your Prophetic Gifting*, p. 52 ff

<sup>432</sup> *ibid*, p. 16

<sup>433</sup> *ibid*, p. 80

<sup>434</sup> Cooke, *Developing Your Prophetic Gifting*, p. 16

<sup>435</sup> Graham Cooke, “A Perfect Combination...His Strength, Your Weakness,” *United Christian Ministries Newsletter* (Spring 1998), p. 1

<sup>436</sup> Graham Cooke, “The Process of Change,” *United Christian Ministries Newsletter* (Spring/Summer 1996), p. 4

<sup>437</sup> Cooke, *Interview*

<sup>438</sup> Cooke, *Developing Your Prophetic Gifting*, p. 49



prophetic sanctification reflects the British Keswick Holiness tradition: for example Jesse Penn-Lewis's teaching on the Cross and the flesh,<sup>439</sup> and Watchman Nee's insistence that God takes 10 - 20 years to produce a preacher.<sup>440</sup>

Peter Hocken early on noted the similarities between charismatic and mystical experiences,<sup>441</sup> but it is usually charismatics from traditional Churches who deploy mysticism<sup>442</sup> or contemplative prayer<sup>443</sup> to maintain longterm charisma.<sup>444</sup> Although Joyner draws on the informal American Seer Tradition, his and Cooke's mysticism lack the resources of Church tradition. Cooke's "silence of God" is only an unconscious echoing of the "via negativa".<sup>445</sup> Without the wider Christian tradition can the new churches provide sufficient soil for prophetic depth?<sup>446</sup>

### Symbolic Prophecy

*Symbolic Prophecy* is another modification of *Manner* illustrated by Cooke's ministry. *Raising the Standard's* hall decorations used banners and drapes, with 'retro' churchly designs. In the evenings, there was a smoke machine, presumably evoking holiness and incense. None of this was explained, but had a taken-for-granted quality. Two large candlesticks occupied the stage, put there because of a dream about intercession. There were also ritual elements. In one session, those who wished were anointed with oil, after removing their shoes in this "holy place." In another, "coals" from a model brazier were applied to people's lips as sign of purification after the example of Isaiah Chapter 6. These examples demonstrate the importance of bodied spirituality and the creation of holy space, and the possibility of prophetic communication through

<sup>439</sup> See Jessie Penn-Lewis, *The Cross. The Touchstone of Faith* (Poole: Overcomer Publications, n.d.)

<sup>440</sup> See Watchman Nee, *What shall this man do?*, p. 114

<sup>441</sup> See Peter Hocken, "Charismatics and Mystics," pp. 11 ff

<sup>442</sup> See Pytches, *Prophecy in the Local Church*, pp. 223 ff

<sup>443</sup> See Joyce Huggett, *Finding God in the Fast Lane* (Guildford: Eagle, 1993)

<sup>444</sup> See Robert Faricy, *Seeking Jesus in Contemplation and Discernment* (Westminster, MD: Christian Classics Inc., 1987[1983])

<sup>445</sup> Hocken, *op cit*, p. 15

<sup>446</sup> See Peter Hocken, *The Strategy of the Spirit* (Guildford: Eagle, 1996), p. 190



symbolic objects and actions.<sup>447</sup>

This use of art and creativity in worship is a long-term characteristic of Cornerstone, although conferences present it in a concentrated form.<sup>448</sup> Cooke has however contributed to its prophetic dimension, for example trying to create in the conference an “environment” for God to act in.<sup>449</sup> Cornerstone’s exploration of the arts however also expresses its social base. Reflecting the shift from an economy based on production to one based on consumption,<sup>450</sup> there are two symbiotically-related class fractions. Artistic image-producers ‘sell’ their products to white collar workers,<sup>451</sup> who consume them as “symbolic capital”,<sup>452</sup> for instance in more elaborate worship styles and ecclesiastical decoration commensurate with their status. The new symbolic prophecy is therefore a “success language” for the new class.<sup>453</sup> Their social ethic therefore is that of an “ascending class” with a “submissive” and “residual” ideology.<sup>454</sup> Furthermore their cultivation of “sacred space” is likely to accentuate the tendency of conservative religion to isolate faith into a Platonised dualistic space (physically) separate from social life.<sup>455</sup>

## Politics

Although Hamon and Joyner exemplify the middle class base of charismatic prophecy, Cooke’s background in business training, represents the emergence of a new petty bourgeois fraction founded on education and mental labour.<sup>456</sup> The middle class ideology of Cornerstone is further revealed in their limited social vision. Cooke

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<sup>447</sup> For a fuller discussion see below, pp. 157 ff

<sup>448</sup> Tony Morton, *Interview* (16.6.97)

<sup>449</sup> Cooke, “Back to the Future”

<sup>450</sup> See Davie, *op cit*, p. 19

<sup>451</sup> See Harvey, *op cit*, p. 290

<sup>452</sup> *ibid*, pp. 347 f

<sup>453</sup> Hervieu-Léger, *op cit*, pp. 144 f

<sup>454</sup> See Schoenfeld, *Militant and Submissive religions*, p. 121

<sup>455</sup> See Simon Barrows, “Mystique and Politique: Spirituality Left or Right,” *The Way* (Vol. 32, No. 1, January 1992), p. 48

<sup>456</sup> See Poulantzas, *Classes in Contemporary Capitalism*, pp. 251 ff



has no conception of prophecy's political role. His prediction of prophets meeting governmental leaders is a personalist misunderstanding of contemporary corporate politics, and is as yet an unfulfilled aspiration.<sup>457</sup> Morton meanwhile seems to believe that prophecy to "the nations" is best expressed through the corporate prophethood of the Church in evangelism.<sup>458</sup>

Although Cornerstone runs several projects ("Firgrove Family Trust" offering pregnancy advice, "Groundswell" providing care for AIDS patients, "Crossroads" giving individual practical help, "Central Counselling Service", and "Kings Primary School"), all express a "familist" ethos<sup>459</sup> reinforcing middle class norms, thereby underscoring the identification of religious and sexual conservatism.<sup>460</sup> There are also accompanying blind spots. No projects address poverty, and although Cornerstone supports missions in India through "Impact Asia", there is no outreach (evangelistic or social) to the sizable Asian population in Southampton. These lacunae might be excusable in a small Church, but they contradict Southampton Community Church's claim to be an "Apostolic City Church" acting as a resource for the city's Churches.<sup>461</sup>

Cornerstone's city-wide strategy is influenced by Argentinean revivalist Ed Silvoso, who teaches that intercession for a city can produce spiritual revival and social change.<sup>462</sup> Cornerstone's "localist" search for plausibility,<sup>463</sup> however, also reflects parallel attempts by city governments to reposition themselves in a global economy.<sup>464</sup>

As the ability to effect large-scale change eludes religious and political elites, the

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<sup>457</sup> See Cooke, *Developing*, p. 20

<sup>458</sup> Morton, *Developing Prophets and Prophecy*, pp. 118 f

<sup>459</sup> McGuire, *op cit*, p. 58

<sup>460</sup> See Wilhelm Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin 1970[1946]), pp. 147 ff

<sup>461</sup> Morton, "What is God saying to the British Church?"

<sup>462</sup> See Ed Silvoso, *That None Should Perish. How to reach Entire Cities for Christ* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1994)

<sup>463</sup> McGuire, *op cit*, p. 41

<sup>464</sup> See Harvey, *op cit*, p. 295



“power fetishism” of the petty bourgeoisie<sup>465</sup> changes focus from the “cosmopolitan” to the more malleable “local” level.<sup>466</sup> They are likely to fail, because institutional differentiation gives little political leverage to specifically religious leaders, as the ideological consensus veers away from even folk-Christianity.<sup>467</sup> With the non-arrival of revival, Cornerstone will probably continue its “domestication” as merely the Restorationist strand within a local denominational (and charismatic) pluralism.<sup>468</sup>

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<sup>465</sup> Poulantzas, *Political Power and Social Classes*, pp. 365 ff

<sup>466</sup> Robert K. Merton, “Types of Influentials: The Local and the Cosmopolitan,” in *Social theory and Social Structure* (New York: The Free Press, 1968[1949]), pp. 447 ff

<sup>467</sup> See McGuire, *op cit*, pp. 237 ff

<sup>468</sup> Walker, *op cit*, p. 23



## CHAPTER 4

### THE CULTURAL-POLITICAL MODEL OF PROPHECY

#### GOD SPEAKS FOR THE POOR

##### 1. INTRODUCTION

Alfredo Fierro wrote in 1977 that, although political theology frequently quotes the Biblical prophets, there was no “well developed theology of prophetism”.<sup>1</sup> This is still true, probably because rather than a distinct phenomenon Cultural-Political prophecy is part of the Christian tradition of cultural and political critique and resistance. There are nevertheless general characteristics: the *Message* is political or cultural liberation; the *Manner* involves intellectual analysis; and the *Messengers* are the oppressed with theologians as their spokespeople. Modifications occur with respect to the different communities theologians identify with.

##### Latin America

The model’s exemplar is liberation theology, which arose from Vatican II’s assertion that the Church shares “Christ’s prophetic office”,<sup>2</sup> and its encouragement to discern God’s activity in the “signs of the times”.<sup>3</sup> Liberation theology was also a response to the material conditions of the poor in Latin America. Its best known exponent is Gustavo Gutierrez. Building on the 1968 Conference of Latin American Bishops in Medellin, he stressed the Church’s “prophetic task” of denouncing injustice,<sup>4</sup> which required not only words but active engagement in the liberation struggle. Besides critical denunciation, however, Gutierrez also emphasised the “announcing” of the

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<sup>1</sup> Alfredo Fierro, *The Militant Gospel. An Analysis of Contemporary Political Theologies* (London: SCM, 1977), p. 139

<sup>2</sup> “Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. Vatican II. *Lumen Gentium*, 21 November 1964,” in Austin Flannery (Ed.), *Vatican Council II. The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents* (Dublin: Dominican Books, 1988), p. 363

<sup>3</sup> “Decree on Ecumenism. Vatican II. *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 21 November 1964,” *ibid*, p. 456

<sup>4</sup> Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1973), p. 115



Kingdom of God in history confronting societal dehumanisation.<sup>5</sup>

Eschatologically, Gutierrez followed De Chardin, proposing an evolutionary understanding of history in which God's love directs the process of human becoming.<sup>6</sup> Although God's Kingdom transcends "temporal progress",<sup>7</sup> the eschatological "promise" is dialectically related to many "partial fulfilments."<sup>8</sup> Prophecy's task is to discern the Kingdom in a "proximate historical event" while continuing toward ultimate fulfilment.<sup>9</sup> Gutierrez therefore opposed Western theology's "discarnate" dualism, for projecting a separate spiritual realm which discourages social change.<sup>10</sup> Instead, he advocated a "utopian" orientation confronting the present with the possibilities of the future.<sup>11</sup>

Gutierrez rejected "horizontalism", the reduction of faith to humanism.<sup>12</sup> Instead, he stressed the "anthropological aspects of revelation", whereby the Word also speaks to us about man.<sup>13</sup> Indeed the Word was "made man". Consequently, for Gutierrez, human history is the arena for "encountering God".<sup>14</sup> With the incarnation, not only Christians, but all people are "temples of God".<sup>15</sup> Therefore, conversion includes "conversion to the neighbour",<sup>16</sup> since Christ's presence is mediated through "consciousness of the other".<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> *ibid*, pp. 268 f

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*, pp. 32 f

<sup>7</sup> *ibid*, p. 171

<sup>8</sup> *ibid*, p. 161

<sup>9</sup> *ibid*, p. 163

<sup>10</sup> *ibid*, p. 166

<sup>11</sup> *ibid*, pp. 232 f

<sup>12</sup> *ibid*, p. 8

<sup>13</sup> *ibid*, p. 7

<sup>14</sup> *ibid*, p. 189

<sup>15</sup> *ibid*, p. 193

<sup>16</sup> *ibid*, p. 194

<sup>17</sup> *ibid*, p. 260



This category of the “other” is important for liberatory prophecy. The Argentinean, Enrique Dussel, asserted that we must distinguish the “totality and the other”.<sup>18</sup> The first act of prophecy is to constitute the negated “other” as my neighbour.<sup>19</sup> Through this prophetic “negation of negation”, the object becomes a subject,<sup>20</sup> because of the “self revelation of the divine Other in the human other”.<sup>21</sup> The prophet therefore becomes a “herald of the new system” - God’s Kingdom.<sup>22</sup> Although Hegelianism influences Dussel,<sup>23</sup> Thomism also stresses “divine self-communication” via “human immanence”.<sup>24</sup> Aquinas’s concept of “natural prophecy” hereby enables the Spirit to be heard through natural means, such as the voice of the poor.<sup>25</sup>

## Intellectuals

Since the human mediates revelation, the human sciences provide valid knowledge about society. Social theory is therefore a necessary mediation for Thomist “natural prophecy”, which becomes a second order activity after information has been gathered. Clodovis and Leonardo Boff, however, distinguish “functionalist” theory which emphasises consensus, from “dialectical” theory such as Marxism, which exposes conflict and the ‘real’ causes of exploitation.<sup>26</sup> The “prophetic-critical” theological task is therefore dependent on having a “critical theory of society”.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Enrique Dussel, *History and the Theology of Liberation. A Latin American Perspective* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1976), p. 145

<sup>19</sup> Enrique Dussel, “Domination - Liberation: A New Approach,” in Claude Geffre & Gustavo Gutierrez (Eds.), *Theology of Liberation. Liberation and Faith. (Concilium. Vol. 6, No. 10, June 1974)*, p. 42

<sup>20</sup> Enrique Dussel, “The Differentiation of Charisms,” in Christian Duquoc & Casiano Floristan (Eds.), *Charisms in the Church. Concilium. Religion in the Seventies* (New York: Seabury Press, 1978), p. 47

<sup>21</sup> Roberto S. Goizueta, *Liberation, Method and Dialogue. Enrique Dussel and North American Theological Discourse* (Atlanta, GEO: Scholar’s Press, 1988), p. 123

<sup>22</sup> Dussel, “Domination - Liberation,” p. 44

<sup>23</sup> Dussel, “Domination - Liberation,” p. 42

<sup>24</sup> Franz Josef Van Beeck, “Divine Revelation: Intervention of Self-communication?” *Theological Studies* (52, 1991), pp. 223 f

<sup>25</sup> See George Every, “Prophecy in the Christian Era,” in Simon Tugwell, George Every, John Orne Mills & Peter Hocken, *New Heaven? New Earth? An Encounter with Pentecostalism* (London: DLT, 1976), pp. 194, 198

<sup>26</sup> Leonardo & Clodovis Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1987), pp. 26 f; quoted in Paul E. Sigmund, *Liberation Theology after the Crossroads. Democracy or Revolution?* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 86

<sup>27</sup> Joseph Kroger, “Prophetic-Critical and Practical-Strategic Tasks of Theology. Habermas and Liberation Theology,” *Theological Studies* (46, 1985), p. 15



Moreover, Prophecy must proceed from liberative “praxis,” since theological knowledge is not merely theoretical but rooted in action.<sup>28</sup>

Fierro claims that for Gutierrez to be consistent, he must abandon pre-critical God-talk,<sup>29</sup> because the assertion that man makes his own history leaves God with nothing to do.<sup>30</sup> Fierro, however, misunderstands Catholicism’s “mediation of immediacy.”<sup>31</sup> As Boff argues the supernatural is not separate from history. Rather the Divine is incarnated through “created mediation, both human-individual and social-and cosmic”.<sup>32</sup> This mediation is supremely through the poor, whom Gutierrez calls “simultaneously poor and believing”.<sup>33</sup> This claim derives from the Roman Catholic doctrine of baptism, which allows Brazilian Pedro Casaldaliga to call all baptised people “Christians”, and therefore prophets, “through their baptism”.<sup>34</sup>

Ecclesiology’s determining role in liberation theology therefore reaches beyond radical base communities to an inclusivist definition of the people of God, hence Casaldaliga’s references to the “religious” character of Latin America’s people<sup>35</sup> and the “evangelical prophetic value of the poor”.<sup>36</sup> His comments are only possible because of the relative lack of sociological pluralism and institutional differentiation in Latin America, which has allowed the Catholic Church’s social voice to be heard.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> See Clodovis Boff, *Theology and Praxis. Epistemological Foundations* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1987), p. 215

<sup>29</sup> Fierro, *op cit*, p. 344

<sup>30</sup> *ibid*, p. 327

<sup>31</sup> J. A. Colombo, “God as hidden, God as Manifest: ‘Who Is the Subject of Salvation in History in Liberation theology?’” *Journal of Religion* (71, 1991), p. 21

<sup>32</sup> Leonardo Boff, *When Theology Listens to the Poor* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1988), p. 82

<sup>33</sup> Gustavo Gutierrez, *The Poor and the Church in Latin America* (London: Catholic Institute for International Relations, 1984), p. 11

<sup>34</sup> Pedro Casaldaliga & Jose Maria Vigil, *The Spirituality of Liberation* (Tunbridge Wells: Burns & Oates, 1994), p. 191

<sup>35</sup> Casaldaliga & Vigil, *op cit*, p. 44

<sup>36</sup> *ibid*, p. 36

<sup>37</sup> See McGuire, *op cit*, p. 237



Although liberation theology is a work of “intellectual analysis”,<sup>38</sup> it takes three forms: “professional, pastoral and popular”.<sup>39</sup> The first represents the “prophetic function” of theology,<sup>40</sup> the second is the task of the priest, but the third is primary. This is the Biblical reflection taking place within base communities. The theologian according to Gutierrez plays the role of Gramsci’s “organic intellectual” rooted in the oppressed community, who bridges the gap between theology and praxis.<sup>41</sup> This Gutierrez achieved through his priestly work in a poor area of Lima, and the creation of the Bartolome de Las Casas Institute and the Centre for Research and Publication.<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, Liberation Theologians experience the tension typical of Western-educated intellectuals in developing countries between cultural belonging and isolation.<sup>43</sup> For example, although Dussel respects the collective “propheticopedagogical function of the church”,<sup>44</sup> he portrays the prophet as individual “hero” and “martyr”.<sup>45</sup>

The Catholic Church has adopted many of the prophetic insights of Liberation Theology, for example at the 1979 Puebla Conference.<sup>46</sup> The 1980s, however, have witnessed Pope John Paul II’s offensive against Marxist influence in liberation theology. Because of this repression, and developments such as economic development and democratic reforms in some countries combined with U.S. counter-insurgency operations elsewhere, plus competition from Pentecostalism, liberation theology suffered a “crisis of hope” in this decade. In this “winter season” the

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<sup>38</sup> Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, p. 9

<sup>39</sup> Clodovis Boff, “Epistemology and the Method of the Theology of Liberation,” in Ignacio Ellacuria & Jon Sobrino (Eds.), *Mysterium Liberationis. Fundamental Concepts of Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis/ Collins Dve: Victoria, AUS., 1993), p. 66

<sup>40</sup> Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, p. 13

<sup>41</sup> Gutierrez, *ibid*

<sup>42</sup> See Milagros Pena, “Liberation Theology in Peru. An Analysis of the Role of Intellectuals in Social Movements,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* (Vol. 33, No. 1, March 1994), p. 40

<sup>43</sup> Edward Shils, *The Intellectuals and the Powers* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 1972), p. 406

<sup>44</sup> Enrique Dussel, *Ethics and the Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1978), p. 78

<sup>45</sup> Enrique Dussel, *Ethics and Community* (Tunbridge Wells: Burns & Oates, 1988), pp. 90 f

<sup>46</sup> *Third General Conference of Latin American Bishops. Puebla. Evangelization at present and in the future of Latin American America. Conclusions* (Slough: St. Paul Publications/ London: Catholic Institute for International Relations, 1980), p. 72



prophetic Church underwent “retrenchment”,<sup>47</sup> and as global capitalism became stronger the projection of “utopia” became even more important.<sup>48</sup>

### South Africa

Opposition to Apartheid engendered another example of the “Prophetic Church”,<sup>49</sup> in particular through the 1985 *Kairos Document*. This distinguished between “State Theology” of the Afrikaner government,<sup>50</sup> which idolised the State,<sup>51</sup> “Church Theology” of the English-speaking liberal churches,<sup>52</sup> which preached “reconciliation” without “repentance;”<sup>53</sup> and “Prophetic Theology”.<sup>54</sup> Prophetic theology is neither a neutral “Third Force”,<sup>55</sup> nor “academic”, “comprehensive and complete”, but partisan and committed.

Emulating Tillich,<sup>56</sup> Prophetic theology tries to discern the “Kairos” of God’s liberating intervention in history.<sup>57</sup> The Kairos theologians, however, refused to define the situation as a purely “racial war,” referring instead to “structural inequality”.<sup>58</sup> Consequently some Black Theologians criticised them for ignoring South African realities.<sup>59</sup> Albert Nolan also suggested that the Kairos Document failed to progress from “Kairos” to “eschaton,” which might have inspired more hope for actual liberation.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Guillermo Melendez, *Seeds of Promise. The Prophetic Church in Central America* (New York: Friendship Press, 1990), p. 100

<sup>48</sup> *ibid*, p. 327

<sup>49</sup> See Peter Walshe, *Prophetic Christianity and the Liberation Movement in South Africa* (Pietermaritzburg, SA: Chister Publications, 1995)

<sup>50</sup> See “The Kairos Document: Challenge to the Church.” in Robert McAfee Brown (Ed.), *Kairos. Three Prophetic Challenges to the Church* (Grand Rapids, MICH: Eerdmans, 1990), pp. 29 ff

<sup>51</sup> *ibid*, p. 35

<sup>52</sup> *ibid*, pp. 37 ff

<sup>53</sup> *ibid*, pp. 32 f

<sup>54</sup> *ibid*, pp. 48 ff

<sup>55</sup> *ibid*, p. 63

<sup>56</sup> See Robert McAfee Brown, “Kairos International: Call to Conversion,” *The Christian Century* (November 22, 1989), p. 1091

<sup>57</sup> *ibid*, p. 49

<sup>58</sup> *ibid*, pp. 53 f

<sup>59</sup> See J. N. J. Kritzinger, “The Kairos Document - A Call to Conversion,” *Missionalia* (Vol. 16, No. 3, November 1988), p. 143

<sup>60</sup> See Albert Nolan, “The Eschatology of the Kairos Document,” *Missionalia* (Vol. 15, No. 2, August 1987), pp. 68 f



As in Latin America, the Church's prophetic effectiveness derived from its position as the only opposition voice,<sup>61</sup> especially after the Government closed many popular organisations in the 1980s.<sup>62</sup> Therefore, as in Latin America the movement went into crisis, confused over its role when Apartheid ended.<sup>63</sup> Desmond Tutu commented that their prophetic task had previously been easier because the enemy was clear.<sup>64</sup> Allan Boesak is adamant however that the Church cannot be a "stopgap prophet," but must continue to critique all post-Apartheid "compromises".<sup>65</sup>

South Africa and South America also reveal some of the differences between Protestant and Catholic conceptions of prophecy. In the WCC document *Church, Kingdom, World*, Lutheran Bishop Manas Buthelezi stresses prophecy as Word,<sup>66</sup> while Dominican Priest Herve Legrand talks sacramentally.<sup>67</sup> Protestant prophecy implies confrontation, as Tutu said, crying "Thus saith the Lord" against injustice.<sup>68</sup> Catholic prophecy arises from the Church's position as "sacrament of the salvation and unity of mankind", denouncing whatever opposes its historical realisation.<sup>69</sup> Sacramentalism also reveals a difference between Protestant and Catholic attitudes to non-Christian religions. Catholic prophecy is more likely to cooperate because it regards them as expressions of universal human religiosity.<sup>70</sup> The *Kairos Document* however, has been criticised for being too exclusively "christian" and neglecting the

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<sup>61</sup> See McGuire, *op cit*, p. 235

<sup>62</sup> See Walshe, *op cit*, p. 123

<sup>63</sup> *ibid*, pp. 136 ff

<sup>64</sup> See Desmond Tutu, *Church and Prophecy in South African Theology. Essex Papers in Theology and Society No. 3* (Colchester: Centre for the Study of Theology in the University of Essex, 1991), p. 18

<sup>65</sup> Allan Boesak, "The Church and a New World Order. South African Reflections," in Denise Lardner Carmody & John Tully Carmody (Eds.), *The Future of Prophetic Christianity. Essays in Honor of Robert McAfee Brown* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1993), pp. 10 f

<sup>66</sup> See Manas Buthelezi, "The Church as a Prophetic sign," in Gennadios Limouris (Ed.), *Church, Kingdom, World. The Church as Mystery and Prophetic Sign* (Geneva: WCC. Faith and Order Paper No. 130, 1986), pp. 138 ff

<sup>67</sup> See Hervé Legrand, "A Response to 'The Church as a Prophetic Sign'," in *ibid*, pp. 145 ff

<sup>68</sup> Desmond Tutu, "On Being the Church in the World," in *Hope and Suffering. Sermons and Speeches* (Johannesburg: Skotasville Publishers, 1983), p. 109

<sup>69</sup> Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, p. 261

<sup>70</sup> See Leonardo Boff, *Church: Charism and Power. Liberation and the Institutional Church* (London: SCM, 1985), p. 75



inter-faith aspect of the liberation struggle.<sup>71</sup>

Another distinctive is the role of mysticism within Catholic prophecy.<sup>72</sup> Gutierrez emphasises that prophet and mystic need each other if the prophet is to avoid exclusivity and the mystic avoid detachment from the world.<sup>73</sup> Segundo Galilea says that the prophet needs contemplative withdrawal from the world in order to escape its ideological determinism.<sup>74</sup> Ernesto Cardenal, a Nicaraguan Sandanista Minister of Culture and poet, illustrates this combination. He is in the South American tradition of socially-committed poetry<sup>75</sup> exemplified by Pablo Neruda.<sup>76</sup> He describes his ministry as prophetic rather than priestly,<sup>77</sup> and several poems were inspired by “visions”.<sup>78</sup>

The *Kairos Document* has had a world-wide influence, inspiring Central American and global Kairos statements.<sup>79</sup> Most of these however have contained comparatively more socio-political analysis than theology. Most recently, a North American *Kairos* has emerged.<sup>80</sup> And this illustrates another Protestant prophetic influence - the North American social gospel.

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<sup>71</sup> See Kritzinger, *op cit*, p. 139

<sup>72</sup> See John Coleman, “Catholic Wellsprings for the Prophetic Imagination,” in Carmody & Carmody, *op cit*, p. 74

<sup>73</sup> See Gustavo Gutierrez, *The Truth Shall Make You Free. Confrontations* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1990), pp. 16 f

<sup>74</sup> See Segundo Galilea, “Liberation as an Encounter with Politics and Contemplation,” in Geffre & Gutierrez, *op cit*, p. 28

<sup>75</sup> See Robert Pring-Mill, “Introduction,” in Ernesto Cardenal, *Marilyn Monroe and other poems* (London: Search Press, 1975), p. 10

<sup>76</sup> See Enrico Mario Santi, *Pablo Neruda: The poetics of prophecy* (Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 1982)

<sup>77</sup> See Teofilo Cabestrero, *Ministers of God. Ministers of the People. Testimonies of Faith from Nicaragua* (London: Zed Press/ Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1983), p. 34

<sup>78</sup> *ibid*, pp. 38 ff

<sup>79</sup> See “Kairos Central America: A Challenge to the Churches of the World,” & “The Road to Damascus: Kairos and Conversion (*Africa, Central America, Asia*),” in McAfee Brown, *Kairos*, pp. 71 ff

<sup>80</sup> See *On the Way: From Kairos to Jubilee* (Chicago, ILL: Kairos/USA, 1994)



## North America

In the United States, this tradition of “the intellectual as prophet”<sup>81</sup> goes back to Rauschenbusch, who saw the prophets as “public men...statesmen”.<sup>82</sup> It derives from the Protestant view of the prophet as preacher, albeit of a social gospel. Protestantism also led Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich to see prophets as critics of static conservative priestly religion<sup>83</sup> and nature worship.<sup>84</sup> Niebuhr’s view of prophecy became increasingly conservative, however, as his hostility to Communism made him critical of radicalism in general.<sup>85</sup> From believing that “prophetic religion” meant proclaiming the “relevance of an impossible ideal” against merely “prudential rules”,<sup>86</sup> he later wrote that prophecy was opposed to an “unprudential” gospel ethic, and advocated “realism” in making “discriminate judgments”.<sup>87</sup>

The most influential exponent of this approach today is Walter Brueggemann. He sees prophetic ministry as nurturing a “consciousness” and a “community” which are “alternative” to the “dominant culture”.<sup>88</sup> This is done by articulating society’s denial of grief,<sup>89</sup> and then imaginatively energising people for change.<sup>90</sup> This involves embracing God’s “pathos”,<sup>91</sup> a term borrowed from Rabbi Abraham Heschel’s study of Israelite prophecy.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Chomsky, *op cit*, p. 84

<sup>82</sup> Walter Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1964[1907]), p. 9

<sup>83</sup> See Reinhold Niebuhr, *Beyond Tragedy. Essays on the Christian Interpretation of History* (London: Nisbet & Co, Ltd., 1938), p. 63; & Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology Vol. I* (London: SCM, 1978), p. 141

<sup>84</sup> Reinhold Niebuhr, *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics* (London: SCM, 1941[1936]), p. 39; & Peter Scott, “Prophetic Expectation,” *Theology* (Vol. XCIX, No. 787, January/February, 1996), pp. 34 ff

<sup>85</sup> See Cornel West, *The American Evasion of Philosophy. A Genealogy of Pragmatism* (Madison, WIS:University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), p. 161

<sup>86</sup> Niebuhr, *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics*, pp. 113 f

<sup>87</sup> Reinhold Niebuhr, “Christians and Jews in Western Civilization,” in Robert McAfee Brown (Ed.), *The Essential Niebuhr* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1986), pp. 186 f

<sup>88</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, pp. 13 f

<sup>89</sup> *ibid*, p. 21

<sup>90</sup> *ibid*, pp. 62 ff

<sup>91</sup> *ibid*, p. 44

<sup>92</sup> See Abraham J. Heschel, *The Prophets* (New York: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1962), pp. 221 ff



Brueggemann however asserts that prophecy is not about politics, but the underlying cultural crisis.<sup>93</sup> Revealing his roots in 1960s radicalism, Brueggemann calls for a “countercultural” voice<sup>94</sup> to address the American “exile” of God’s people.<sup>95</sup> This will be done by the “poet-prophet”, using metaphorical language to envision new possibilities. Here again is the Protestant vision of prophet as preacher.<sup>96</sup> Although Brueggemann censures both conservatives and liberals,<sup>97</sup> his political sympathy is evidently with the latter despite his criticism of the “liberal co-opting” of prophecy.<sup>98</sup> A colloquy on prophecy by the United Church of Christ, whose pastors he has lectured and in which his wife ministers,<sup>99</sup> exposes the liberal dilemma. The denomination admits its failure to be prophetic, recognising that liberal ethical prophecy lacks the spiritual power to effect transformation,<sup>100</sup> and becomes “judgmental and moralistic.”<sup>101</sup> Nevertheless, in Britain, Margaret Pickup from the Saltley Trust, uses Brueggemann’s “method” of moving from grief to hope,<sup>102</sup> running workshops<sup>103</sup> with urban community activists.<sup>104</sup>

## Britain

Brueggemann’s prophetic writing was in the context of right-wing government in America. The same is true of Britain. Here the assault by Margaret Thatcher’s government on the post-war consensus of welfarism and social democracy,<sup>105</sup>

<sup>93</sup> Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, p. 28

<sup>94</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *Hopeful Imagination. Prophetic Voices in Exile* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1986), p. 19

<sup>95</sup> *ibid*, p. 92

<sup>96</sup> See Walter Brueggemann, *Finally Comes The Poet. Daring Speech for Proclamation* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1989), p. 4

<sup>97</sup> See Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, p. 14

<sup>98</sup> Brueggemann, *Hopeful Imagination*, p. 53

<sup>99</sup> See Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, p. 10

<sup>100</sup> See Eugene Wehrli, “Bible Study Lectures,” in *Craigville XIII Theological Colloquy. “How can we be both Catholic and Prophetic?” A Colloquy Exploring Community, Unity and Justice* (July 15 - 19, 1996), pp. 22 f

<sup>101</sup> *ibid*, p. 26

<sup>102</sup> Margaret Pickup, *Interview* (26.11.97)

<sup>103</sup> e.g. *Being and Building a Prophetic Group*, at 36 Causton St., London (28.10.97)

<sup>104</sup> See Margaret Pickup. *In Secure Attachment. A spirituality for church based development work. Some thoughts and exercises* (Birmingham: St. Peter’s Saltley Trust, 1997)

<sup>105</sup> See Henry Clarke, *The Church Under Thatcher* (London: SPCK, 1993), pp. 7 ff



included an attack on traditional Conservative paternalism.<sup>106</sup> The Church of England therefore found itself increasingly representing the inclusivist values of the establishment against a sectarian government. This caused a politicisation of the Church,<sup>107</sup> on nuclear deterrence and the inner cities, which reasserted the “prophetic call for justice”.<sup>108</sup>

However, the religious left also began to recover prophetic language. Faced with the entrenched power of conservative governments, prophecy represents crisis language, providing the absolutist vocabulary needed to confront and cope with extreme ideological enemies. Fenn has suggested that in a secular society, the appeal to religious political legitimation may actually increase, as the search for authoritative speech continues.<sup>109</sup> Indeed, when rationalistic problem-solving, like Marxism, fails then symbolic language becomes more attractive.<sup>110</sup> Theological exploration of the “powers”<sup>111</sup> and apocalyptic<sup>112</sup> may also be due to such feelings of powerlessness by the religious left during years of Conservative rule. Their manipulation of religious symbols however made prophecy a terrain of ideological conflict,<sup>113</sup> as the left entered “the battle for the word ‘prophecy’” against fundamentalism.<sup>114</sup>

In 1980, David Haslam and Rex Ambler edited *Agenda for Prophets*, a collection of leftist articles on contemporary Britain. Many of its contributors were in COSPEC (Christian Organisations for Social, Economic and Social Change). Much of their

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<sup>106</sup> See Bruce, *op cit*, p. 32

<sup>107</sup> See Kenneth Medhurst & George Moyser, *Church and Politics in a Secular Age* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p. viii

<sup>108</sup> *Faith in the City. A Call for Action by Church and Nation. The Report of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Urban Priority Areas* (London: Church House Publishing, 1985), p. 52

<sup>109</sup> quoted in McGuire, *op cit*, p. 259

<sup>110</sup> See Beattie, *op cit*, p. 228

<sup>111</sup> See Walter Wink, *Naming the Powers. The Language of Power in the New Testament* (Basingstoke: Marshall-Pickering, 1988[1984])

<sup>112</sup> See Christopher Rowland, *Radical Christianity* (Cambridge: Polity, 1988)

<sup>113</sup> cf. P. M. Hall, “A Symbolic Interactionist Analysis of Politics,” in A. Effrat, *Perspectives in Political Sociology* (Indianapolis, I: Bobbs-Merrill, 1973), p. 53

<sup>114</sup> Neil McIlwraith, “The Burden of Prophecy,” in Neil McIlwraith (Ed.), *The Burden of Prophecy* (Birmingham: SCM Publications, 1982), p. 12



thinking was the product of inner city experience, spurred by the 1981 uprisings. Prophecy was seen as “acted parables, prophetic signs” by small groups.<sup>115</sup> The Student Christian Movement declared 1982 - 83 a study year on “prophecy”,<sup>116</sup> and published a series of booklets exploring the theme. These collections of papers encompassed the Old Testament<sup>117</sup> and New Testament basis<sup>118</sup> for contemporary prophetic action, besides analysing prophecy itself<sup>119</sup> and the inner city context.<sup>120</sup> In general, adopting liberation theology’s approach, they saw the poor as the voice of prophecy<sup>121</sup> and Marxism as the essential method of analysis.<sup>122</sup>

After harbouring Narodnik-like delusions, middle class radicals realised that, in Britain unlike Latin America, the unchurched working classes have little enthusiasm for “doing theology” from above or below.<sup>123</sup> E. R. Norman’s attack on Anglican political attitudes as products of middle class liberal education,<sup>124</sup> does not strictly apply to these radicals. Nevertheless, they did reflect the lower middle class ideals of the 60s and 70s. The right’s triumphs and the left’s tiredness, however, meant that radicals struggled with the “dialectics of disaster”<sup>125</sup> and the dilemma of hope.<sup>126</sup> Furthermore the accelerating marginalisation of institutional Christianity has meant that where prophetic acts have occurred, the specifically Christian motivations are subsumed within secular radicalism. For example, commentator John Pilger reinterpreted the

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<sup>115</sup> John Vincent, “Doing Theology,” in David Haslam & Rex Ambler, *Agenda for Prophets. Towards a Political Theology for Britain* (London: Bowerdean Press, 1980), pp. 32 f

<sup>116</sup> McIlwraith, *op cit*, p. 6

<sup>117</sup> Mary Tanner, *Old Testament Prophecy: a pattern for today’s Church* (Birmingham: SCM Publications, n.d.)

<sup>118</sup> John Davies, *Jesus and the Prophets* (Birmingham: SCM Publications, 1983)

<sup>119</sup> See McIlwraith, *The Burden of Prophecy*

<sup>120</sup> Neil McIlwraith (Ed.), *Ghost Town. Poverty and Prophecy in the Inner City* (Birmingham: SCM Publications, 1982)

<sup>121</sup> See Colin Winter, “The Style and Content of Modern Prophecy,” in McIlwraith, *The Burden of Prophecy*, pp. 65 f

<sup>122</sup> See Francis McHugh, “The Social Context of Prophecy,” in *ibid*, pp. 51 ff

<sup>123</sup> See David Clarke, “Doing Theology in Britain,” in Ian M. Fraser & Joseph E. O’Brien (Eds.), *A Theology for Britain in the 80s April 9-13 1981* (March 1982), p. 152

<sup>124</sup> E. R. Norman, *Church and Society in England 1770 - 1970* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 8

<sup>125</sup> See Ronald Aronson, *The Dialectics of Disaster. A Preface to Hope* (London: Verso, 1983)

<sup>126</sup> Pat Gaffney, *Interview* (7.12.97)



prophetic Christian motivation of one member of the East Timor Plowshares women (arrested for damaging Fighters destined for Indonesia)<sup>127</sup> as common “straightforward morality”.<sup>128</sup> The question is whether Christian political prophecy can impact an increasingly de-Christianised culture?<sup>129</sup>

This chapter examines Jim Wallis’s evangelical American radicalism, Cornel West’s Afro-American philosophical pragmatism, and Kenneth Leech’s Anglo-Catholic socialism. These illustrate how ecclesial and communal influences shape Cultural-Political prophecy which itself emphasises the social.

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<sup>127</sup> See Pat Gaffney, “Prophetic Licence?” *Christian Socialist* (No. 162, Autumn 1996), pp. 1 f

<sup>128</sup> See John Pilger, *Hidden Agendas* (London: Vintage, 1998), p. 315

<sup>129</sup> For the difficulty of prophecy in contemporary culture, see pp. 214 ff



## 2. JIM WALLIS: ANGLO-AMERICAN RADICALISM

### Evangelicalism

Jim Wallis comes from a Plymouth Brethren family. His politics were radicalised through his involvement with the civil rights<sup>130</sup> and anti-Vietnam war movements,<sup>131</sup> during his time at Michigan State University (1966 - 70). After the war, when many protesters lacking vision drifted back to the American mainstream,<sup>132</sup> Wallis returned to his evangelical “roots”<sup>133</sup> and enrolled at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. In 1971, with other students, he founded the *PostAmerican*, a magazine and an intentional community designed to challenge the “American captivity of the church”.<sup>134</sup> The community eventually moved from the suburbs to Chicago’s inner city, but internal relationships soured because, in Wallis’s opinion, they were “more a collection of individuals than a community”.<sup>135</sup> Then in 1975, they moved to Washington DC, and changed the name to *Sojourners* to express their specifically Christian vision.<sup>136</sup>

Describing himself as a “pastor, an editor, a teacher, and an evangelist”,<sup>137</sup> Wallis’s work has been the “redirection of the evangelical tradition”<sup>138</sup> away from conservative definitions. He had discovered that although most evangelicals were pro-war, the anti-war liberal Christians had little grasp of spiritual issues.<sup>139</sup> Hence Wallis’s revision of traditional terms. Whereas “conversion” had become a “personal matter”,<sup>140</sup> Wallis felt it could not occur in a “historical vacuum”. Conversion demands turning away from

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<sup>130</sup> See Jim Wallis, *The New Radical* (Tring, Herts: Lion, 1983), pp. 31 ff

<sup>131</sup> *ibid*, pp. 56 f

<sup>132</sup> *ibid*, p. 69

<sup>133</sup> Jim Wallis, *The Call To Conversion* (New York: HarperCollins, 1982), p. xvi

<sup>134</sup> *ibid*, p. 31

<sup>135</sup> Wallis, *The New Radical*, p. 91

<sup>136</sup> *ibid*, p. 98

<sup>137</sup> Wallis, *The Call To Conversion*, p. xvii

<sup>138</sup> Wallis, *The New Radical*, p. 14

<sup>139</sup> *ibid*, pp. 62 ff

<sup>140</sup> *ibid*, p. 170



contemporary idols (such as racism, nuclear weapons and materialism) to God's Kingdom.<sup>141</sup> In addition, he tried to recapture the evangelical idea of "revival",<sup>142</sup> interpreting it as widespread social change, albeit resulting from the "outpouring of the Holy Spirit".<sup>143</sup>

Nevertheless, Wallis insists that prophets must "love the Church" and not merely denounce it.<sup>144</sup> For Wallis, however, as for Brueggemann, the American Church is in "exile",<sup>145</sup> having succumbed to "cultural conformity".<sup>146</sup> Influenced by Hendrik Berkhof, William Stringfellow, John Yoder, and Jacques Ellul, he accused it of worshipping society's idols, behind which lie the "powers".<sup>147</sup> Both conservative and liberal Christians have fallen captive, the former ignoring social injustice and the latter any sense of spiritual values.<sup>148</sup> Whether by "evangelical piety or liberal therapy",<sup>149</sup> God becomes a way of satisfying consumer desires. Instead of this "cheap grace", Wallis emphasised discipleship.<sup>150</sup> Influenced by the 1970s simple lifestyle movement<sup>151</sup> and intentional communities, he portrayed the Church as the "new community" of the Kingdom.<sup>152</sup>

## Prophecy

Echoing Barth, Wallis stressed the Church could only recover its "prophetic mission" if it also recovered its "revelational basis".<sup>153</sup> For Wallis, only revelation could equip the Church for "countercultural resistance" to social conformity.<sup>154</sup> Wallis's

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<sup>141</sup> Wallis, *The Call To Conversion*, p. 5

<sup>142</sup> Wallis, *The New Radical*, p. 187

<sup>143</sup> Jim Wallis, *The Rise of Christian Conscience* (The CMS 1986 Annual Sermon), p. 15

<sup>144</sup> Wallis, *The New Radical*, p. 156

<sup>145</sup> Jim Wallis, *Agenda for Biblical People* (London: Triangle, 1986[1976]), p. 29

<sup>146</sup> *ibid*, p. 25

<sup>147</sup> *ibid*, p. 43

<sup>148</sup> *ibid*, pp. 30 ff

<sup>149</sup> Wallis, *The Call To Conversion*, pp. 28 f

<sup>150</sup> Wallis, *Agenda for Biblical People*, p. 9

<sup>151</sup> cf. Ronald J. Sider, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1977)

<sup>152</sup> *ibid*, pp. 73 ff

<sup>153</sup> Wallis, *Agenda for Biblical People*, p. 93

<sup>154</sup> *ibid*, p. 36



eschatology is largely unspoken. He wrote that Christ inaugurated the Kingdom as a new order,<sup>155</sup> which exists in the present but in “tension” with its final consummation.<sup>156</sup> This suggests an amillennial stance favourable to political action. Certainly other Sojourners prefer this to an apolitical premillennialism.<sup>157</sup>

The *Sojourners Community Statement of Faith* affirms the “charismata” including “the gift of prophetic witness and the call to be a visionary community”.<sup>158</sup> Wallis, however, was suspicious of charismatic spirituality, fearing it restricted “new forms of gifts” relevant to political action.<sup>159</sup> His own prophetic inspiration was the Old Testament tradition, exemplified by Martin Luther King.<sup>160</sup> This “prophetic vocation”, according to Wallis, meant challenging “idolatry” without “selectivity, partiality, or parochial interest”.<sup>161</sup> This involved getting specific, and naming America’s economic and military idols,<sup>162</sup> although Wallis also quoted Barth to show that the Word of God had to be independent of any political system, left or right. “Politicized theology” was “no substitute for prophetic witness”.<sup>163</sup> Indeed, prophecy had its own idols. Its commitment could become a desire for justification by works through political activism rather than depending on Grace.<sup>164</sup>

Sojourners’ prophetic *Manner* in the inner city included rent strikes, occupying tenements, cooperatives, and setting up a Neighbourhood Centre which they turned over to local control. Internationally, they opposed nuclear weapons as a

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<sup>155</sup> *ibid*, p. 3

<sup>156</sup> *ibid*, p. 97

<sup>157</sup> See Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, “The Promise of God’s Reign,” in Jim Wallis (Ed.), *Recovering the Evangel. A guide to faith, politics, and alternatives to the Religious Right* (Washington: Sojourners, n.d.), pp. 7 ff

<sup>158</sup> “Our Life At The Foot Of The Mountain. Sojourners Community Statement of Faith,” *Sojourners* (February-March 1992), p. 23

<sup>159</sup> Wallis, *Agenda for Biblical People*, p. 80

<sup>160</sup> Wallis, *The New Radical*, p. 64

<sup>161</sup> *ibid*, p. 154

<sup>162</sup> Wallis, *The Call To Conversion*, p. 31

<sup>163</sup> Wallis, *The New Radical*, p. 155

<sup>164</sup> See Jim Wallis, “Idols Closer to Home: Christian Substitutes for Grace,” in Jim Wallis (Ed.), *The Rise of Christian Conscience. The emergence of a dramatic renewal movement in today’s church* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), pp. 189 ff



blasphemous denial of dependence on God for the nation's security,<sup>165</sup> and criticised United States support for right-wing governments and insurgents in Central America.<sup>166</sup> Wallis's tactical use of "symbolic actions", such as organising people around housing issues<sup>167</sup> and the 1983 Peace Pentecost in Washington,<sup>168</sup> shows how "ritual" can legitimate radical as well as conservative politics.<sup>169</sup> Nevertheless, Wallis, as a Protestant, distinguishes between "prophetic preaching and practical action".<sup>170</sup> His depiction of prophecy, however, is not rationalistic. The "prophetic mission" needs the Holy Spirit for "ethical discernment"<sup>171</sup> to avoid political reactivism.<sup>172</sup> Furthermore it is especially in worship that one hears God's Word,<sup>173</sup> although since the Word of God is "located outside the centers of power"<sup>174</sup> compassion is best recharged through living in physical "proximity to the poor".<sup>175</sup>

## 1990s

Faced with the nuclear threat in the 1980s, Wallis wrote of the need to move "from protest to resistance".<sup>176</sup> The 1990s have seen another shift from "prophetic protest" to "prophetic vision". Quoting Brueggemann, Wallis writes that positive social reconstruction requires "prophetic imagination" which can only be provided by "faith communities".<sup>177</sup> Wallis's prophetic *Message* hereby shifts from "exile" to Nehemiah's post-exilic rebuilding,<sup>178</sup> from "dissent to transformation."<sup>179</sup> Wallis's early

<sup>165</sup> Wallis, *The New Radical*, p. 129

<sup>166</sup> Jim Wallis, "Witness for Peace: A Venture of Faith and Prayer," in Wallis, *The Rise of Christian Conscience*, pp. 42 ff

<sup>167</sup> Wallis, *The New Radical*, p. 119

<sup>168</sup> Jim Wallis, "Peace Pentecost: Moved by the Spirit," in Wallis, *The Rise of Christian Conscience*, pp. 113 ff

<sup>169</sup> cf. David L. Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics, and Power* (New Haven/London: Yale University press, 1988), pp. 54 ff

<sup>170</sup> Wallis, *The Call To Conversion*, p. 132

<sup>171</sup> Wallis, *Agenda for Biblical People*, p. 81

<sup>172</sup> Wallis, *Agenda for Biblical People*, p. 96

<sup>173</sup> Wallis, *The Call To Conversion*, pp. 146 f

<sup>174</sup> Wallis, *The New Radical*, p. 169

<sup>175</sup> Wallis, *The Call To Conversion*, p. 51

<sup>176</sup> Wallis, "Peace Pentecost," p. 119

<sup>177</sup> Jim Wallis, *The Soul of Politics. A Practical and Prophetic Vision for Change* (London: Fount, 1994), pp. 45 f

<sup>178</sup> *ibid*, p. 237

<sup>179</sup> Jim Wallis, "Lessons from the Celebration," *Sojourners* (August 1994), p. 5



oppositionalism was reinforced by the need to maintain hope during Reagan and Bush's Republican Presidencies. Encouragement came, however, with Clinton's 1992 election, which Wallis saw as an opportunity for radicals. Instead of polarisation between right and left in America's "culture wars",<sup>180</sup> he advocated finding "common ground by moving to higher ground". Only a "prophetic political morality" could transcend ideological differences.<sup>181</sup> Echoing Richard Neuhaus, although not his politics, Wallis opposed the secularisation of the "Public Square".<sup>182</sup>

Wallis's hope turned to disappointment with the appearance of "Clinton the compromiser rather Clinton the visionary".<sup>183</sup> Wallis subsequently began to emphasise holding Clinton "accountable" especially after the 1995 Welfare cuts.<sup>184</sup> Meanwhile the 1994 mid-term election defeats for the Democrats alerted Wallis to the danger from the Religious Right, especially the Christian Coalition.<sup>185</sup> From his 1960s vantage-point, Wallis perceives social movements as more effective than electoral politics as vehicles of cultural change.<sup>186</sup> So in 1995 Sojourners, together with liberal and conservative Christian groups, issued the *The Cry For Renewal*, which advocated a "spiritual politics" transcending ideological polarisation,<sup>187</sup> and formed "Call To Renewal," an ongoing coalition to oppose poverty, racism and inequality, and strengthen the family.<sup>188</sup> This has invited conservatives and liberals to attend round table discussions on poverty<sup>189</sup> and provide "prophetic leadership" for the nation.<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Jim Wallis, "Who Speaks for God?" in Wallis, *Recovering the Evangel*, p. 6

<sup>181</sup> Wallis, *The Soul of Politics*, p. xiii

<sup>182</sup> See Richard John Neuhaus, *The Naked Public Square. Religion and Democracy in America* (Grand Rapids, MICH: Eerdmans, 1984)

<sup>183</sup> Jim Wallis, "The First Quarter," *Sojourners* (January 1994), p. 4

<sup>184</sup> Jim Wallis, *New Politics. New Danger*. Talk at Greenbelt Festival (23.8.96) which I attended.

<sup>185</sup> Jim Wallis, "The Elections: Danger and Opportunity," *Sojourners* (December 1994 - January 1995), p. 6

<sup>186</sup> Wallis, *New Politics. New Danger*.

<sup>187</sup> *The Cry for Renewal. Biblical Faith and Spiritual Politics* (Washington: The Call to Renewal, 23.5.95)

<sup>188</sup> *Statement of Policy Principles* (Washington: Call To Renewal, 9.6.97)

<sup>189</sup> *Call To Renewal Newsletter* (Vol. 2, No. 3, 1997), p. 2

<sup>190</sup> *Call To Renewal Newsletter* (Vol. 2. No. 2, 1997), p. 2



Attempting to influence the 1996 Presidential elections, Wallis wrote *Who Speaks for God?* His answer to this prophetic question is that God speaks “on behalf of those who have no voice”.<sup>191</sup> Although the right have recognised the spiritual nature of the crisis, they have ignored justice<sup>192</sup> and suppressed this American “prophetic tradition”.<sup>193</sup> The left meanwhile have failed to talk about values at all.<sup>194</sup> So to counter the disillusionment with party politics caused by negative campaigning,<sup>195</sup> Wallis draws on Communitarian language<sup>196</sup> to advocate a new “civility”,<sup>197</sup> a non-extremist “moral centre” built on all religious traditions,<sup>198</sup> a new partnership of public and private initiatives in welfare,<sup>199</sup> and a “community economy”<sup>200</sup> based on “microenterprises.”<sup>201</sup>

### Deutero-Wallis

This development from Proto- to Deutero-Wallis compares with Brueggemann’s twofold progression from grief to energisation. Wallis has said that “prophetic screaming” against injustice “gets tiring after a while”.<sup>202</sup> Fenn’s theory that religious language challenges secular power by “disruptive” speech,<sup>203</sup> may therefore be reversed by exhaustion after youthful zeal dissipates. Wallis’s recognition of widespread cultural crisis coincides with his personal crisis. For the first time he has left pastoral leadership at Sojourners,<sup>204</sup> leaving Rose Berger as the community’s pastor. This is partly due to his marriage, and perhaps a move towards consensual

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<sup>191</sup> Jim Wallis, *Who Speaks for God? An Alternative to the Religious Right - A New Politics of Compassion, Community, and Civility* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1996), p. 7

<sup>192</sup> *ibid*, p. 34

<sup>193</sup> *ibid*, p. 16

<sup>194</sup> *ibid*, pp. 152 f

<sup>195</sup> cf. Martin P. Wattenberg, *The Decline of American Political Parties 1952-88* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), pp. 132 f

<sup>196</sup> cf. Amitai Etzioni, *The Spirit of Community* (London: Fontana, 1995)

<sup>197</sup> Wallis, *Who Speaks for God?*, pp. 143 ff

<sup>198</sup> *ibid*, p. 39

<sup>199</sup> *ibid*, p. 32

<sup>200</sup> *ibid*, p. 97

<sup>201</sup> *ibid*, p. 101

<sup>202</sup> Jim Wallis, *Interview 1* (26.8.96)

<sup>203</sup> Fenn, *Liturgies and Trials*, p. 168

<sup>204</sup> Jim Wallis, *Interview 2* (1.9.97)



leadership against Wallis's wishes.<sup>205</sup> His recent move to do research at Harvard may further lessen his hold on Sojourners.<sup>206</sup> Moreover, as with the wider intentional community movement, Sojourners Community itself is in a "fallow period" and most of the staff no longer belong to it.<sup>207</sup> The Community's core is between twelve<sup>208</sup> and twenty.<sup>209</sup> This presents a problem for Sojourners' "prophetic" stance, which is still included in its self-description,<sup>210</sup> since its prophetic reputation derives from its community lifestyle.<sup>211</sup>

Social reconstruction requires a coalition, utilising Wallis's community organising skills. This reflects the rainbow nature of progressive politics in the United States, which united initially to support Clinton.<sup>212</sup> As their hopes were dashed,<sup>213</sup> the American left plunged into crisis.<sup>214</sup> Despite the label's unpopularity,<sup>215</sup> Wallis certainly identified with Michael Lerner and Cornel West<sup>216</sup> as a "progressive".<sup>217</sup> Wallis's political liberalism has provoked accusations that he has also become theologically liberal.<sup>218</sup> He still claims to be evangelical and recognises that prophecy is often a "codeword for the Christian Left".<sup>219</sup> Most of Sojourners' staff, however, would now define themselves as "ecumenical"<sup>220</sup> or "progressive Christian radicals"

<sup>205</sup> Bill Wylie-Kellerman, *Interview* (24.5.97)

<sup>206</sup> See Jim Wallis, "The Body of Christ," *Sojourners* (September-October 1998), pp. 7 ff

<sup>207</sup> *ibid*

<sup>208</sup> Rose Berger, *Interview* (1.8.97)

<sup>209</sup> Mark Farr, *Interview* (30.7.97)

<sup>210</sup> "What Is Sojourners?" *Sojourners* (July-August 1997), p. 4

<sup>211</sup> See Howard Snyder, *Liberating the Church. The Ecology of Church and Kingdom* (Basingstoke: Marshalls, 1983), p. 192

<sup>212</sup> See Iwan W. Morgan, *Beyond the Liberal Consensus. A Political History of the United States since 1965* (London: C. Hurst, 1994), p. 269

<sup>213</sup> See John Hart, "The Presidency in the 1990s," in Gillian Peele, Christopher J. Bailey, Bruce Cain & B. Guy Peters (Eds.), *Developments in American Politics 2* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), p. 119

<sup>214</sup> See Harvey J. Kaye, "Introduction: The New American Crisis," in Greg Rugiero & Stuart Sahulka (Eds.), *The New American Crisis* (New York: The New Press, 1995)

<sup>215</sup> See Anthony Howard, "'Progressive' Democrats flee from the liberal ghosts of conventions past," *The Times* (27 August 1996), p. 9

<sup>216</sup> Wallis, *The Soul of Politics*, p. xiv

<sup>217</sup> *ibid*, p. 42

<sup>218</sup> See Ronald H. Nash, *Why the Left Is Not Right. The Religious Left: Who They Are and What They Believe* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), pp. 56 ff

<sup>219</sup> Wallis, *Interview 2*

<sup>220</sup> Berger, *Interview*



rather than evangelical.<sup>221</sup>

Although Wallis refuses to evaluate politics by evangelicalism's "litmus test" of abortion and homosexuality<sup>222</sup> he cannot sidestep these genuine political markers. Although in contrast to his earlier moral "absolute" on nuclear weapons<sup>223</sup> his views on these issues involve compromise, then and now his opinions mirror the liberal consensus. Wallis is personally anti-abortion, and has called for a consistent pro-life ethic" on nuclear weapons and abortion,<sup>224</sup> and recently criticised Clinton's veto of a Bill against early abortions.<sup>225</sup> Nevertheless his search for "common ground" between pro-life and pro-choice lobbies mirrors the liberal quest for consensus.<sup>226</sup> Rather than legislative action, he wants to see "cultural persuasion" to limit abortions.<sup>227</sup> A similar compromise characterises his attempt to simultaneously defend human rights for gays and support the family, although he admits that he has yet to find "common ground" on this question.<sup>228</sup>

## Liberalism

It is hard for Wallis to have enemies on the left, because the ideological dominance of the right during this period has driven him into the arms of his ecumenical allies away from earlier Anabaptist influences. Inevitably there is a danger of "indifferentism" towards distinct beliefs as one cooperates with others.<sup>229</sup> Religious groups involved in militant politics frequently become less specifically 'religious' with time.<sup>230</sup> This

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<sup>221</sup> Farr, *Interview*

<sup>222</sup> Wallis, *Interview 2*

<sup>223</sup> Wallis, *The Call To Conversion*, p. 92

<sup>224</sup> Jim Wallis, "Introduction: The Rise of Christian Conscience," in Wallis, *The Rise of Christian Conscience*, p. xxvi

<sup>225</sup> Jim Wallis, "Lift Every Voice," *Sojourners* (July-August 1996), p.7 f

<sup>226</sup> cf. Todd David Whitmore, "Common ground, not middle ground: Crossing the pro-life, pro-choice divide," & Frederica Matthews-Green, "Pro-life, pro-choice: Can we talk?" *The Christian Century* (3-10 January 1996), pp. 10 ff

<sup>227</sup> Wallis, *Who Speaks for God?*, p. 185

<sup>228</sup> Wallis, *Interview 2*

<sup>229</sup> Whitmore, *op cit*

<sup>230</sup> See Roberts, *op cit*, p. 239



dilemma of necessary “compromise” faces all prophetic “reformers”,<sup>231</sup> including the right, as Sojourners maintain.<sup>232</sup> A sociological explanation, however, may be found in Sojourners’ original class composition among young college-educated evangelicals.<sup>233</sup> With their base in the new knowledge elite, Sojourners clashed with older evangelical bourgeois elites.<sup>234</sup> Sojourners’ progressive amillennialism characterised an affluent stratum confident of its problem-solving abilities.<sup>235</sup> Although initially they retained religious distinctiveness, predictions that they would accommodate to the ascending class’s generally liberal outlook are being fulfilled.<sup>236</sup> In addition, accommodation continues evangelicalism’s post-war move into the mainstream, and the trend towards “transconfessional” cooperation for practical ends.<sup>237</sup>

Sojourners also reprises “Liberal Evangelicalism’s” preference for social reform over doctrinal correctness.<sup>238</sup> Wallis’s unconscious pragmatism, which evaluates religion by its social utility, typifies American attitudes to prophetic politics.<sup>239</sup> This kind of “Social Christianity”<sup>240</sup> forms part of America’s “civil religion”, which Robert Bellah describes in terms of the official religious symbols used to legitimate power in America.<sup>241</sup> Wallis criticises this as an idolatry incompatible with Biblical faith,<sup>242</sup> but another conception of civil religion is Will Herberg’s. Herberg describes it as the American way of life underlying the “plurality” of “Protestant - Catholic - Jew.”<sup>243</sup>

<sup>231</sup> Gaetano Mosca, *The Ruling Class* (New York/London: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1939), p. 169

<sup>232</sup> See Mark Cerbone, “Short on Scripture, Long on Ideology,” in Wallis, *Recovering the Evangel*, pp. 10 ff

<sup>233</sup> See Benton Johnson, “Religion and Politics in America: the Last Twenty Years,” in Hammond, *op cit*, p. 311

<sup>234</sup> See Berger, “The Class Struggle in American Religion,” p. 197

<sup>235</sup> See Roberts, *op cit*, 246

<sup>236</sup> See James Davison Hunter, *American Evangelicalism*, p. 112

<sup>237</sup> Wells, “”On Being Evangelical,” in Noll et al, *op cit*, p. 403

<sup>238</sup> See G. W. Butterworth, *Churches, Sects and Religious Parties* (London: SPCK, 1936), pp. 31 ff

<sup>239</sup> cf. Neal Riemer, *The Future of the Democratic Revolution. Toward a More Prophetic Politics* (New York: Praeger, 1984)

<sup>240</sup> See Paul T. Phillips, *A Kingdom on Earth. Anglo-American Social Christianity* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996)

<sup>241</sup> See Robert N. Bellah, “Civil Religion in America,” in Robert N. Bellah, *Beyond Belief. Essays on Religion in a Post-Traditional World* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), pp. 168 ff

<sup>242</sup> Wallis, *Agenda for Biblical People*, pp. 26 ff

<sup>243</sup> Will Herberg, *Protestant - Catholic - Jew. An Essay in American Religious Sociology* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, Doubleday, 1960), pp. 77, 85



Wallis therefore is simply extending civil religion's consensus to new groups like Moslems,<sup>244</sup> New Agers,<sup>245</sup> even the irreligious.<sup>246</sup> Because Wallis's "prophetic spirituality" includes "many religious traditions",<sup>247</sup> it therefore requires an "inclusive spirituality" which is "nonsectarian"<sup>248</sup> and avoids "proselytizing".<sup>249</sup>

Martin Marty writes that there are "two kinds of civil religion", the priestly and the prophetic.<sup>250</sup> Though the latter criticises the system, it employs society's ideological deep structure to do so, reminding it to be consistent with its own values. In effect, the revelation underlying Wallis's civil religious prophecy is the "natural revelation of God in the American experience",<sup>251</sup> not his earlier Barthian Jeremiad. Where Wallis saw the Church as prophetic *Messenger*, now the "religious community" is the "prophetic interrogator" of the system.<sup>252</sup> The Church is relegated to a "convening role".<sup>253</sup>

## Wisdom?

Wallis's reconstructed prophetism expresses two ideological perspectives. Firstly, the public square is "not-so-naked".<sup>254</sup> The public square reflects the hegemonic ideology of global capitalism. Wallis's communitarian support for smallscale enterprise is unlikely to redress this dominance. It is an example of American populist, petty bourgeois opposition to concentrations of wealth and power whether by big

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<sup>244</sup> Wallis, *The Soul of Politics*, p. 47

<sup>245</sup> *ibid*, p. 41

<sup>246</sup> *ibid*, p. 34

<sup>247</sup> *ibid*, pp. 40 f

<sup>248</sup> *ibid*, p. 45

<sup>249</sup> *ibid*, p. 36

<sup>250</sup> Martin E. Marty, "Two Kinds of Civil Religion," in Donald G. Jones & Russell E. Richey, *American Civil Religion* (San Francisco: Mellon Research University Press, 1990[1974]), pp. 144 f

<sup>251</sup> James D. Smart, *The Cultural Subversion of the Biblical Faith* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1977), p. 27

<sup>252</sup> *ibid*, p. 99

<sup>253</sup> Jim Wallis quoted in "Prophet Motive. Bob Holman talks to Jim Wallis," *Third Way* (July 1995), p. 18

<sup>254</sup> Rodney Clapp, "The Not-So-Naked Public Square," *Re:generation Quarterly* (Vol. 2, No. 4), pp. 20 ff



government or big business.<sup>255</sup> Secondly, Wallis's views reflect the Constantinian consensus underlying civil religion,<sup>256</sup> that religion should be judged by its social utility. Weber indicated the difference between political and prophetic vocations, and between political and idealistic ethics.<sup>257</sup> Wallis's search for effectiveness is more characteristic of the former, as he repeats Niebuhr's progress from idealism to realism.

Wallis's consensual approach may overcome the institutional differentiation of pluralistic society. But compared to his earlier oppositionalism, its utilitarianism belongs more to the genre of wisdom literature than prophecy.<sup>258</sup> It may create an alternative to the Religious Right,<sup>259</sup> although Wallis knows that new divisions could erupt if the Churches fail to unite around concern for the poor.<sup>260</sup> It is questionable therefore whether "Call To Renewal" can stimulate the prophetic revitalisation of a fragmented American Church and society.

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<sup>255</sup> Wallis, *The Soul of Politics*, p. 43

<sup>256</sup> cf. John Howard Yoder, "Civil Religion in America," in John Howard Yoder, *The Priestly Kingdom. Social Ethics as Gospel* (Notre Dame, I: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), pp. 177 f

<sup>257</sup> See Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," in *From Max Weber*, pp. 83, 119

<sup>258</sup> cf. R.B.Y. Scott, *The Way of Wisdom* (New York: Macmillan, 1971), p. 113

<sup>259</sup> See David Neff, "Boy Preacher Turns Friendly Critic An Interview with William Martin," *Christianity Today* (28 April 1997), p. 24

<sup>260</sup> See Jim Wallis, "All Together Now!" *Sojourners* (May-June 1997), p. 26



### 3. CORNEL WEST: AFRO-AMERICAN PRAGMATISM

#### Gospel

Cornel West is Professor of Religion and Afro-American Studies at Harvard University, having been one of the first black students there in 1970. He has previously taught at Union Theological Seminary, and Yale Divinity School. His grandfather was a Baptist pastor in Tulsa, though the family later moved to Sacramento, California.<sup>261</sup> In 1982, he edited a report of the *Theology in the Americas* Conference,<sup>262</sup> and published his own *Prophesy Deliverance!*<sup>263</sup> These reveal the early influence on West of Liberation Theology, albeit refracted through the lens of black America. For him the *Message* is black liberation and he is a “Christian freedom fighter.”<sup>264</sup> God is on the side of the oppressed.<sup>265</sup> Before this “transcendent God” of “evangelical and pietistic Christianity” all stand equal, regardless of race.<sup>266</sup>

This eschatological hope gives Afro-Americans a “subversive joy and revolutionary patience”,<sup>267</sup> which is however “anti-utopian” because God’s Kingdom is so discontinuous with history that any amelioration falls short.<sup>268</sup> Black Christianity’s pessimistic emphasis on “depravity”<sup>269</sup> and “fallible finitude”<sup>270</sup> further encourages scepticism about political claims and promotes institutional checks on power. This

<sup>261</sup> See Cornel West, *The Ethical Dimensions of Marxist Thought* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1991), pp. xv ff

<sup>262</sup> Margaret Coakley, Coridad Guidote & Cornel West (Eds.), *Theology in the Americas: Detroit II* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1982)

<sup>263</sup> Cornel West, *Prophesy Deliverance! An -Afro-American Revolutionary Christianity* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1982)

<sup>264</sup> *ibid*, p. xxviii

<sup>265</sup> Cornel West, “A World of Ideas. Interview with Bill Moyers,” in Cornel West, *Prophetic Reflections. Notes on Race and Power in America* (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 1993), p. 106

<sup>266</sup> West, *Prophesy Deliverance!*, pp. 15 f

<sup>267</sup> Cornel West, “Subversive Joy and Revolutionary Patience in Black Christianity,” in Cornel West, *Prophetic Fragments* (Grand Rapids, MICH: Eerdmans/ Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, Inc., 1988), pp. 161 ff

<sup>268</sup> Cornel West, “On the Influence of Lukacs. Interview by Eva L. Corredor,” in *Prophetic Reflections*, pp. 55 f

<sup>269</sup> Cornel West, “Critical theory and Christian Faith,” in *Prophetic Fragments*, p. 121

<sup>270</sup> Cornel West, “Alasdair MacIntyre, Liberalism, and Socialism: A Christian Perspective,” *ibid*, p. 128



fallibilism enables Christianity to include the “sense of the tragic without curtailing agency”.<sup>271</sup> For West, Christianity’s truth lies not in rational proof or empirical evidence but in the sustaining potential of the “suffering God”.<sup>272</sup> Drawing on Kierkegaard, he values Christianity for its ability to confront evil,<sup>273</sup> particularly as it reflects the “absurdity” of Afro-American experience.<sup>274</sup> Jesus was crucified therefore not only as an “agent of deliverance”, but as an “exemplar” whose resurrection gives us hope.<sup>275</sup> Christ is the model for the “prophetic thinker”, who speaks “truth to power with love and humility”.<sup>276</sup>

## Roots

For West, prophecy is not specifically Christian. It refers to a “critical consciousness” suspicious of all, religious and secular, “idols” and “forms of authority”.<sup>277</sup> This “prophetic criticism” has two intellectual sources: firstly, “Euro-American modernity” which institutionalised the “critique of illegitimate authority”; secondly, “new world Afro-American modernity” which institutionalised “critiques of white-supremacist authority”.<sup>278</sup> West’s “Prophetic Thought” contains “four basic components”:

1. “discernment”, which requires a “nuanced historical sense”;
2. “human connection” or “empathy”;
3. “keeping track of human hypocrisy”, the “gap between principles and practice”, although this must be “self-critical” since, as “fallen vessels”, no one has “unmediated

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<sup>271</sup> Cornel West, “Beyond Multiculturalism and Eurocentrism,” in *Prophetic Thought in Postmodern Times*, p. 21

<sup>272</sup> Cornel West, “Pragmatism and the Tragic,” *ibid*, p. 49

<sup>273</sup> Peter Osborne, “Interview. Cornel West: American radicalism,” *Radical Philosophy* (No. 71, May/June 1995), p. 27

<sup>274</sup> Cornel West, “*A World of Ideas*. Interview by Bill Moyers,” in *Prophetic Reflections*, p. 108

<sup>275</sup> West, “Subversive Joy and Revolutionary Patience,” p. 162

<sup>276</sup> Cornel West, “The Future of Pragmatic Thought,” in *Prophetic Thought in Postmodern Times*, p. 66

<sup>277</sup> Osborne, *op cit*, p. 36

<sup>278</sup> Cornel West, “Preface,” in Cornel West, *Keeping Faith. Philosophy and Race in America* (New York/London: Routledge, 1993), pp. xi f



access to God”.

4. prophecy has to “galvanize and energize...world-weary people” with hope.<sup>279</sup>

For West, the “institutional roots of the prophetic tradition in Afro-America lie in the black Churches”,<sup>280</sup> which inspired the civil rights movement.<sup>281</sup> He acknowledges the strangeness of slaves adopting the master’s religion, but argues that they emulated the more democratic Baptist and Methodist “left wing of the Reformation”.<sup>282</sup> In addition, he stresses the attractions of evangelicalism’s emphasis on individual experience, equality, and institutional autonomy for black-led Churches. Reversing Nietzsche, West celebrates Christianity’s status as a “slave religion”.<sup>283</sup> He notes too that the Afro-American “prophetic tradition” never produced a “militant millennialist tradition”. The slave-owners’ power was so great that insurrection would have produced “communal suicide.”<sup>284</sup>

West also distinguishes the “prophetic church” from right wing “privatistic conceptions” of faith. Rather than trying to create a divisive “Christian Nation”, prophetic religion brings people together by using the “common moral language of society”.<sup>285</sup> He therefore criticises “one dimensional forms of spirituality” which preach “health and wealth” among poor blacks, but ignore the structural reasons for their poverty.<sup>286</sup> Similarly, he recognises the homophobia of much Afro-American religion. He thinks they have confused communal “unity” with an exclusivist and marginalising “homogeneity”.<sup>287</sup> Consequently, West yearns for a more

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<sup>279</sup> West, “Beyond Eurocentrism and Multiculturalism,” pp. 3 ff

<sup>280</sup> Cornel west, “The Prophetic Tradition in Afro-America,” in *Prophetic Fragments*, p. 42

<sup>281</sup> Cornel West, “Charlie Parker didn’t give a damn,” in *Prophetic Reflections*, p. 16

<sup>282</sup> West, “A World of Ideas,” p. 107

<sup>283</sup> West, *Prophesy Deliverance!*, p. 35

<sup>284</sup> West, “The Prophetic Tradition in Afro-America,” p. 44

<sup>285</sup> Cornel West, “Religion, Politics. Language,” in *Prophetic Fragments*, p. 23

<sup>286</sup> Cornel West, in Bel Hooks & Cornel West, *Breaking Bread. Insurgent Black Intellectual Life* (Boston, MASS: South End Press, 1991), p. 14

<sup>287</sup> West, “On the Future of the Black Church,” p. 80



“sophisticated” clergy which can critically analyse social issues,<sup>288</sup> and resist the pressure from conservative Churches to refrain from prophetic ministry.<sup>289</sup>

West recognises that prophetic thought involves “religious vision” and practical “action” as well as intellect,<sup>290</sup> but for him the *Messenger* is the intellectual and the *Manner* intellectual reflection. West, however, distinguishes several kinds of intellectual activity; firstly, the bourgeois intellectual collaborating with the system; secondly, the Marxist intellectual, critical but marginal and therefore projecting unrealistic “chiliastic” hopes; thirdly, the postmodern intellectual without any moral norms; fourthly, the “insurgency model” of the “critical organic catalyst” rooted in black institutions.<sup>291</sup> This is based on Gramsci’s notion of the organic intellectual.<sup>292</sup> For West this concept does not mean vaguely identifying with the oppressed, but entails practical involvement with a “particular organization”.<sup>293</sup> The weakness of contemporary Marxism, according to West, is that it “rests on no specific historical forces”.<sup>294</sup>

## Influences

West cites his membership of the Democratic Socialists of America as a way of being “engaged”.<sup>295</sup> However, although this and his academic work form part of the arena for his prophetic work, his most important context is Church. In particular, West perceives his Sunday preaching as part of a “prophetic tradition”,<sup>296</sup> consciously emulating the “oral” tradition of the “black prophetic preacher”<sup>297</sup> as an “artistic

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<sup>288</sup> West, *ibid*, p. 73

<sup>289</sup> Cornel West, “Introduction to William H. Pipe’s *Say Amen, Brother!*” in *Prophetic Reflections*, p. 35

<sup>290</sup> Cornel West, “Prophetic Theology,” in *Prophetic Reflections*, p. 224

<sup>291</sup> Cornel West, “The Dilemma of the Black Intellectual,” in *Keeping Faith*, pp. 72 ff

<sup>292</sup> Cornel West, “The Postmodern Crisis of Black Intellectuals,” in *Prophetic Thought*, p. 100

<sup>293</sup> Osborne, *op cit*, p. 34

<sup>294</sup> Cornel West, “Frederic Jameson’s American Marxism,” in *Keeping Faith*, p. 188

<sup>295</sup> West, “On the Influence of Georg Lukacs,” in *Prophetic Reflections*, p. 58

<sup>296</sup> *ibid*

<sup>297</sup> West, “Introduction,” in *Prophetic Thought*, p. ix



rhetorician” within the black community.<sup>298</sup> Another influence is Marxism. Although he recognises that there are “irreconcilable differences”,<sup>299</sup> he is willing to make “tactical and strategic” use of Marxism to apply Christianity’s moral vision.<sup>300</sup> He claims there is no “christian political theory”,<sup>301</sup> and criticises black theology for its failure to explain structural inequalities.<sup>302</sup> Although West thinks Christianity possesses no social analysis, however, he does use a Christocentric perspective founded on the Cross to highlight oppression.<sup>303</sup>

Philosophical Pragmatism is another major intellectual influence on West. Indeed, he played an important role<sup>304</sup> in the resurgence of this American philosophical tradition<sup>305</sup> among academics, weary of technical linguistic philosophy and longing for “norms and values” to support social change.<sup>306</sup> Pragmatism’s stress on “consequent phenomena” contributes to West’s eschatology by making the future a significant factor in ethics.<sup>307</sup> By avoiding ultimate truth claims, however, pragmatic fallibilism protects him from millennialism and dogmatism.<sup>308</sup> Furthermore, the “epistemic pluralism” of Goodman and Rorty dethroned science from its privileged position vis-a-vis religion,<sup>309</sup> although West criticised their failure to appreciate the “status of religion”.<sup>310</sup> Pragmatism, according to West, needs socio-historical analysis and “synoptic” moral visions derived from all the world’s traditions<sup>311</sup> to correct its inability to grasp the

<sup>298</sup> Cornel West, “The Political Intellectual,” in *Prophetic Reflections*, p. 96

<sup>299</sup> West, *The Ethical Dimensions of Marxist Thought*, p. xxvii

<sup>300</sup> Cornel West, “Rethinking Marxism,” in *Prophetic Reflections*, p. 181

<sup>301</sup> West, *The Ethical Dimensions of Marxist Thought*, p. xxix

<sup>302</sup> West, *Prophesy Deliverance!*, p. 106

<sup>303</sup> Cornel West, “Critique and Mercy in the Cross of Christ,” *The Other Side* (Vol. 29, No. 4, July/August 1993), p. 8 ff

<sup>304</sup> See John Rajchman & Cornel West (Eds.), *Post-analytic Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985)

<sup>305</sup> See Cornel West, “Prophetic Pragmatism. Cultural Criticism and Political Engagement,” in Russell B. Goodman (Ed.), *Pragmatism. A Contemporary Reader* (New York/London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 209 ff

<sup>306</sup> West, *The American Evasion of Philosophy*, p. 4

<sup>307</sup> *ibid*, p. 91

<sup>308</sup> Cornel West, “Pragmatism and the Tragic,” in *Prophetic Thought*, p. 43

<sup>309</sup> West, *The American Evasion of Philosophy*, p. 98

<sup>310</sup> Cornel West, “The Historicist Turn in the Philosophy of Religion,” in *Keeping Faith*, p. 126

<sup>311</sup> *ibid*, p. 130



actual operation of power.<sup>312</sup>

Similar concerns underlie West's arguments with postmodernism. Although he values Foucault's deconstructionism, West criticises Foucault failure to examine structural determinants of exploitation<sup>313</sup> and his "fetishization of criticism," which produces only irony because there are no values to base critique upon.<sup>314</sup> Although West agrees with the postmodern critique of enlightenment universalism, he perceives a cultural crisis on the left because there are no agreed norms.<sup>315</sup> Therefore, while West shares postmodernism's antipathy to "grand theory" he appreciates the need for limited explanatory theories,<sup>316</sup> hence his "heuristic" use of Marxism to understand the social "totality".<sup>317</sup>

Nevertheless, West supports pragmatic and postmodern "antirealism in ontology", criticising "religious realists" and rejecting religious foundationalism.<sup>318</sup> He consequently calls himself a "prophet without metaphysics".<sup>319</sup> Rather than the hierarchical Old Testament "Thus says the Lord," his prophecy is more democratic,<sup>320</sup> a "tradition of resistance and critique" rather than "revelation".<sup>321</sup> In effect West espouses a Wittgensteinian trope<sup>322</sup> which accentuates an apophatic theology without any counterbalancing cataphatic mode.<sup>323</sup> His spirituality is similar to those revolutionaries, in which immanent secular experience transmits a sense of "ultimacy"

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<sup>312</sup> *ibid*, p. 137

<sup>313</sup> West, "The Postmodern Crisis of Black Intellectuals," p. 103

<sup>314</sup> West, "The Historicist Turn in the Philosophy of Religion," p. 139

<sup>315</sup> Cornel West, "Beyond Eurocentrism and Multiculturalism," in *Prophetic Reflections*, pp. 130 ff

<sup>316</sup> Cornel West, "Theory, Pragmatism and Politics," in *Keeping Faith*, p. 93

<sup>317</sup> West, "The Political Intellectual," p. 82

<sup>318</sup> Cornel West, "Dispensing with Metaphysics in Religious thought," in *Prophetic Fragments*, p. 26

<sup>319</sup> West, "On the Influence of Georg Lukacs," p. 51

<sup>320</sup> *ibid*, pp. 66 f

<sup>321</sup> Osborne, *op cit*, p. 36

<sup>322</sup> cf. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (London: Routledge & KeganPaul, 1981[1922]), p. 187 §7

<sup>323</sup> cf. "Dionysius' Mystical Teaching," in Clifton Wolters (Trans.), *The Cloud of Unknowing and other works* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 191978), pp. 214 ff



and “transcendence”.<sup>324</sup> For West then, revelation occurs implicitly in the experience of black people.

### Context

West knows that conservative black Church leaders criticise him for appropriating religious narratives for political purposes.<sup>325</sup> West’s religious utilitarianism results from his pragmatism, following William James who wrote that “without a God”, morality loses its “maximal stimulating power”.<sup>326</sup> Thus although West asserts the resurrection is “true,” without value-free standards ‘truth’ becomes merely a spur to action.<sup>327</sup> Although West claims that he does not value religion as Gramsci did, for “political aims”, West does so for “existential sustenance”.<sup>328</sup> Typically for an intellectual, West thereby transforms religion into an issue of “meaning”.<sup>329</sup> His Marxism and Afro-American roots help him avoid outright idealism, but religion is still judged by its “social utility”.<sup>330</sup> West’s approach here reflects the “this-worldly instrumental quality” of Afro-American religion in general.<sup>331</sup> Black Churches have regularly deployed “typological ethnogenesis”, using Biblical themes to support their liberatory “theological and political strategy”.<sup>332</sup>

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<sup>324</sup> Eugene C. Bianchi, *The Religious Experience of Revolutionaries* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co. Inc., 1972), p. 21

<sup>325</sup> See West, “Beyond Eurocentrism and Multiculturalism,” in *Prophetic Reflections*, p. 137

<sup>326</sup> See William James, *The Will to believe and other essays on popular philosophy and Human Immortality* (New York: Dover Publications, 1956), p. 212

<sup>327</sup> Cornel West, “A Philosophical View of Easter,” in *Prophetic Fragments*, pp. 260 ff

<sup>328</sup> West, *The American Evasion of Philosophy*, p. 232

<sup>329</sup> See Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, p. 125

<sup>330</sup> Leon Wieseltier, “The Unreal world of Cornel West. All and Nothing at all,” *The New Republic* (6 March 1995), p. 12

<sup>331</sup> Hans A. Baer & Merrill Singer, *African-American Religion in the Twentieth Century* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1992), p. 237

<sup>332</sup> Theophus H. Smith, *Conjuring Culture. Biblical Formations of Black America* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 56



The political context also explains West's strategic approach. Like Wallis, he reacted to the defeat of left-liberal politics in the 1980s and 90s. Faced with "winter in Afro-America" under Reagan,<sup>333</sup> he struggled to develop "left strategies",<sup>334</sup> observing that in the absence of any "social movement", "American prophetic people" tended to withdraw inwards.<sup>335</sup> In such times, West asserted the importance of "traditions of resistance" and religious faith in maintaining hope. West, with Wallis, felt Clinton's election presented "new possibilities" for "social activism".<sup>336</sup> But the defeat of health care legislation, and the Republican mid-term gains, made him predict "bleak times for progressive possibilities".<sup>337</sup> Although he sees a role for the Democratic Party in holding capital accountable, West has flirted with the third party black politics<sup>338</sup> and worked with the New Party.<sup>339</sup>

West's politics, however, embrace a wider concern for the erosion of black civil society by market values. The cultural "buffers" of specifically black institutions no longer protect "deracinated" Afro-Americans."<sup>340</sup> Moreover the Judaeo-Christian tradition, with its "non-market values",<sup>341</sup> is in decline and "losing its prophetic fervor."<sup>342</sup> As an intellectual, dealing with symbols, West feels acutely this religious vacuum.<sup>343</sup> Black political leadership, mired in compromise, is also not supplying "prophetic thought and actions".<sup>344</sup> Moreover, the black middle class find their new status discourages costly prophetic commitment to radical action.<sup>345</sup> Their emergence

<sup>333</sup> Cornel West, "Winter in Afro-America," *ibid*, pp. 35 f

<sup>334</sup> Cornel West, "Left Strategies Today," in *Prophetic Fragments*, pp. 137 ff

<sup>335</sup> Cornel West, "The Future of Pragmatic Thought," in *Prophetic Thought*, p. 74

<sup>336</sup> West, "Introduction," in *Prophetic Thought*, p. ix

<sup>337</sup> Osborne, *op cit*, p. 38

<sup>338</sup> cf. Katherine Tate, *From Protest to Politics. The New Black Voters in America* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation/Cambridge, MASS: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 151

<sup>339</sup> See Greg Ruggiero & Stuart Sahulka, "Preface", & Cornel West & Bel Hooks, "Breaking Bread: A Dialogue Among Communities in Search of Common Ground," in Ruggiero & Sahulka, *op cit*, pp. xii, 224 ff

<sup>340</sup> Hooks & West, *Breaking Bread*, p. 97

<sup>341</sup> Cornel West, "The Limits of Neopragmatism," in *Keeping Faith*, p. 139

<sup>342</sup> Cornel West, "Introduction. The Crisis in Contemporary American Religion," in *Prophetic Fragments*, p. ix

<sup>343</sup> See L.S. Feuer, *Ideology and the Ideologists* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1975), p. 169

<sup>344</sup> West, "The Future of Pragmatic Thought," p. 71

<sup>345</sup> Cornel West, "The Black Underclass and the Philosophers," in *Prophetic Thought*, p. 157



during the hedonistic 1960s meant that they lack the “self-denial and sexual asceticism” needed to preserve community.<sup>346</sup>

### Strategy

In defending civil society, West distinguishes the “preservative mode,” which defends traditions against market incursions, from the “conservative mode”.<sup>347</sup> The left has failed West feels, because it has not understood the importance of religion among the oppressed.<sup>348</sup> Therefore West advocates the reactivation of black civil society, centred on the black Church. This can play an economic role in the community by conserving resources and promoting enterprise,<sup>349</sup> and also generate “motivational structures” to produce “character”.<sup>350</sup> This requires a personal “politics of conversion”,<sup>351</sup> which motivates West’s work in High Schools.<sup>352</sup> As Deotis Roberts has noted, the black Church needs to move from “external prophecy” confronting racism, to “internal prophecy” addressing their own community.<sup>353</sup>

West’s approach to religion then follows the pattern of American civil religion, as he acknowledges when he praises Martin Luther King’s “appropriation” of that tradition.<sup>354</sup> His references to “prophetic churches, prophetic mosques, prophetic synagogues”<sup>355</sup> derive from the pluralistic nature of American civil religion with its “subspecies” and “denominations”<sup>356</sup> West’s philosophical non-realism also resonates well with the interfaith perspective and “negative revelation” of God’s silence, which

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<sup>346</sup> Cornel West, “The Crisis in Black Leadership,” in Cornel West, *Race Matters* (Boston, MS: Beacon Press, 1993), p. 36

<sup>347</sup> West, “On the Influence of Georg Lukacs,” p. 48

<sup>348</sup> Cornel West, “The Black Church and Socialist Politics,” in *Prophetic Fragments*, p. 68

<sup>349</sup> West, “On the Future of the Black Church,” p. 75

<sup>350</sup> West, “The Crisis in Black America,” p. 221

<sup>351</sup> West, “Nihilism in Black America,” in *Race Matters*, p. 19

<sup>352</sup> West, “*A World of Ideas*,” p. 105

<sup>353</sup> J. Deotis Roberts, *The Prophethood of Black Believers. An African American Political Theology for Ministry* (Louisville, K: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994), pp. 22 f

<sup>354</sup> West, *The American Evasion of Philosophy*, p. 235

<sup>355</sup> West, “Beyond Eurocentrism and Multiculturalism,” in *Prophetic Thought*, p. 24

<sup>356</sup> See Martin Marty, *op cit*, p. 141



contemporary critical civil religion requires.<sup>357</sup> He writes, religion has “no monopoly” on values.<sup>358</sup> What is needed is an “all-inclusive moral vision.”<sup>359</sup> Like Wallis, West calls for a focus on the “common good” to unite progressive forces,<sup>360</sup> hence his dialogue with Michael Lerner, to overcome the antipathy between Jew and Afro-American radicals.<sup>361</sup>

The black Churches’ continuing decline and the loss of its social integration role poses difficulties for West’s communal revitalisation. He belongs to the “third generation” of black migrants who left the South.<sup>362</sup> This generation typically searches for identity in their cultural religion, but without the metaphysical belief.<sup>363</sup> How will West appeal to the secularised fourth generation of youths? Why appeal to religious values as opposed to secular ones if the only standard is the pragmatic power of “habit”?<sup>364</sup> West is part of the ascending<sup>365</sup> secularised black petty bourgeoisie, defined by academic mental labour<sup>366</sup> and culturally separated from their roots, whom he criticises. Can his rhetoric overcome increasing class divisions in black society?<sup>367</sup> It is unlikely to stem the decomposition of America’s “dying civilization”, which West laments even if black people never benefited from it anyway.<sup>368</sup>

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<sup>357</sup> Andrew Shanks, *Civil Society. Civil Religion* (Oxford/Cambridge, MS: Blackwell, 1995), pp. 21, 90

<sup>358</sup> West, “*A World of Ideas*,” p. 106

<sup>359</sup> West, “The Future of Pragmatic Thought,” p. 74

<sup>360</sup> Cornel West, “Introduction: Race Matters,” in *Race Matters*, p. 6

<sup>361</sup> Michael Lerner & Cornel West, *Jews and Blacks. A Dialogue on Race, Religion, and Culture in America* (Harmondsworth: Plume/Penguin, 1996)

<sup>362</sup> See Leonard Dinnerstein, Roger L. Nichols & David M. Reimers, *Natives and Strangers: Blacks, Indians, and Immigrants in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 257 ff

<sup>363</sup> See Herberg, *op cit*, pp. 27 ff

<sup>364</sup> John Dewey, “The Search for the Great Community,” in David W. Minar & Scott Greer (Eds.), *The Concept of Community* (London: Butterworths, 1969), p. 334

<sup>365</sup> Schoenfeld, “Religion, Class Conflict, and social Justice,” p. 43

<sup>366</sup> Poulantzas, *Classes in Contemporary Capitalism*, *ibid*

<sup>367</sup> See Tate, *op cit*, p. 16

<sup>368</sup> See Osborne, *op cit*, p. 38



#### 4. KEN LEECH: ANGLO-CATHOLIC SOCIALISM

##### Activism

Ken Leech is the community theologian at St. Botolph's Church in East London. He was born in Manchester, and came to London in 1958 as a student. Graduating in 1964 from Trinity College Oxford, he became a Curate in Hoxton. He went subsequently to St. Anne's in Soho, where he worked among the drug subculture and homeless, and founded the Centrepont project. After being chaplain at St. Augustine's College in Canterbury between 1971 and 1974, he returned to East London, becoming priest at St. Matthews, Bethnal Green. Here he became involved in anti-racist action against the National Front and with others founded the Jubilee Group, which was initially a support group for socialist Anglo-Catholic clergy, but now includes laity and non-Christians.

In 1980 Leech was appointed the Race Relations Field Officer for the Board of Social Responsibility and in 1987 he became director of the Runnymede Trust an information unit concerning racism.<sup>369</sup> His present post as a "community thinker" involves theological reflection with Christian and secular groups on local community and political issues.<sup>370</sup> In addition he does most of the administrative work for the Jubilee Group.<sup>371</sup> Despite protestations that the Group has its own identity, it is built around Leech (as a prophetic support group) and kept going by his efforts.

<sup>369</sup> See Kenneth Leech, *First Draft. Ken Leech and the East End of London 1958 - 1998. Some Key Moments*, (Unpublished Paper)

<sup>370</sup> Kenneth Leech, *The Sky is Red. Discerning the signs of the times* (London: DLT, 1997), p. 52

<sup>371</sup> See Kenneth Leech, *Urban Theology Work at St. Botolph's Aldgate. Report for 1997* (London: St. Botolph's Church, March 1998), p. 2



Although Leech suspects those who claim to make “prophetic utterances”,<sup>372</sup> he sees the Church as a “prophetic minority”, whose *Message* is God’s Kingdom.<sup>373</sup> Prophecy however is a “by-product” of one’s “vision of God”, making prophets “seers” rather than “hearers”.<sup>374</sup> For Leech such prophecy has six elements:

1. “vision”, not to be trivialised as the “psychic or paranormal level”;
2. contemplation or prayer;
3. “accurate knowledge” of the social context;
4. “interpretation involving discernment and discrimination”;
5. “ek-stasis” and “eccentricity”, placing prophecy on the boundary between “mysticism and madness”;
6. a “universal moral sense” rather than legalism.<sup>375</sup>

Through “clear perception” engendered by contemplation, the prophet “sees” and confronts the idolatry of western society.<sup>376</sup> Quoting Brueggemann, Leech defines the prophet as a “destabilising” presence.<sup>377</sup> This “prophetic political work” of “unmasking.... illusion and falsehood”, is the task of Christian intellectuals, who therefore should not be isolated in academia.<sup>378</sup>

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<sup>372</sup> Richard Toews, *Interview with Ken Leech for MA Thesis: “The Jubilee Group in the Church of England: The Prophetic Voice of a Community in Ekklesia,”* (Unpublished Notes) (Dept. Sociology and Anthropology, Simon Fraser University, BC: May 1997)

<sup>373</sup> Kenneth Leech, “Christian Social Action: It’s Theological Basis,” in Kenneth Leech, *The Social God* (London: Sheldon Press, 1981), p. 6

<sup>374</sup> *ibid*, p. 13

<sup>375</sup> Kenneth Leech, *Spirituality and Pastoral Care* (London: Sheldon, 1986), pp. 67 ff

<sup>376</sup> Kenneth Leech, “Contemplation as a Subversive Activity,” in *The Social God*, p. 52

<sup>377</sup> Kenneth Leech, *Subversive Orthodoxy. Traditional Faith and Radical Commitment* (Toronto, Ontario: Anglican Book Centre, 1992), p. 43

<sup>378</sup> Kenneth Leech, *The Eye of the Storm*, p. 137



## Eschatology

Leech derived his eschatology from the Anglo-Catholic socialists, Stanley Evans<sup>379</sup> and Gresham Kirkby.<sup>380</sup> They opposed existentialist, liberal and evangelical Protestant individualism, and stressed the present social reality of the Kingdom in the Church. They saw the parousia as a “process which is both present and also moving towards its final consummation”.<sup>381</sup> Leech repeated this “earthly context of redemption”,<sup>382</sup> and opposed Luther’s dualistic two-Kingdoms theology dividing the political and spiritual,<sup>383</sup> which he felt had encouraged neglect of the Old Testament prophetic tradition and thereby contributed to the rise of fascism in Germany.<sup>384</sup>

For Leech, the Kingdom provides a utopian “vision”<sup>385</sup> challenging the Church to cooperate with Christ’s work of “transformation in the midst of the historical order”.<sup>386</sup> Its “otherworldliness” does not mean “withdrawal from this world”, but the “struggle for its transformation by the powers of the world to come”. Leech disagrees with liberal theology’s evolutionary political gradualism<sup>387</sup> because, although the Kingdom’s coming is a process, it is not gradual but punctuated by crises.<sup>388</sup> Leech found symbols of crisis in apocalyptic,<sup>389</sup> which stressed the “discontinuity” between the old and new ages.<sup>390</sup> His 1997 book, based on an earlier sermon,<sup>391</sup> on discerning the

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<sup>379</sup> See Stanley Evans, *The Faith we Teach. Towards Catholic Renewal* (London: Jubilee Group/Christian Literature Association, 1965), p. 10

<sup>380</sup> See Gresham Kirkby, “Kingdom Come: The Catholic Faith and Millennial Hopes,” in Kenneth Leech & Rowan Williams (Eds.), *Essays Catholic and Radical* (London: the Bowerdean Press, 1983), p. 61

<sup>381</sup> *ibid*, p. 67

<sup>382</sup> Leech, *True God*, p. 80

<sup>383</sup> See Kenneth Leech, *Struggle in Babylon. Racism in the Cities and Churches of Britain* (London: Sheldon Press, 1988), p. 211

<sup>384</sup> See *ibid*, p. 213

<sup>385</sup> Leech, *The Eye of the Storm*, p. 131

<sup>386</sup> *ibid*, p. 216

<sup>387</sup> See Kenneth Leech, “Fighting social evil: Radicals and conservatives share roots,” *The Witness* (Vol. 78, No. 3, March 1995), pp. 24 f

<sup>388</sup> cf. Andrew Bradstock, *Faith in the Revolution. The Political theologies of Muntzer and Winstanley* (London: SPCK, 1997), p. 155

<sup>389</sup> See Kenneth Leech, “What has happened to Christian Social Theology?” *Theology* (No. 537, March 1965), p. 137

<sup>390</sup> Leech, *True God*, p. 81

<sup>391</sup> See Kenneth Leech, “Epilogue. ‘The Sky is Red and Threatening’,” in *Struggle in Babylon*, pp. 216 ff



“signs of the times”, is his own apocalyptic “warning”.<sup>392</sup> Leech, however, distinguishes “soft” and “hard” millennialism - the former being the Christian socialist belief in an earthly kingdom and the latter a belief in Christ’s personal return.<sup>393</sup> For Leech, Christ’s coming is not literal, but refers to a “fuller revelation” of our destiny in God.<sup>394</sup> A Catholicised millennium thereby becomes a symbol of “divine presence and activity” on earth.<sup>395</sup>

Marxism, especially Trotskism, has strongly influenced Leech.<sup>396</sup> Although he has criticised their “vanguardism”,<sup>397</sup> with the collapse of Communism he detects a collapse of any alternative “vision”.<sup>398</sup> The political context for his ministry, since the late 70s, has been the succession of Conservative Governments. In 1977 Leech warned about renewed right wing repression and fascism in Britain as capitalism went into crisis<sup>399</sup> and advocated “confronting racism with the prophetic word”.<sup>400</sup> After Thatcher’s election, Leech continued his critique,<sup>401</sup> condemning Thatcherism for its nationalism<sup>402</sup> and individualism,<sup>403</sup> and calling for a “theology of urban conflict”<sup>404</sup> after the 1981 urban uprisings. He wrote, however, that theological critique of Thatcherism could only come from a Church which employed “prophecy”.<sup>405</sup>

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<sup>392</sup> Leech, *The Sky is Red*, p. 5

<sup>393</sup> *ibid*, p. 189

<sup>394</sup> *ibid*, p. 201

<sup>395</sup> *ibid*, p. 190 f

<sup>396</sup> See Kenneth Leech, *Politics and the Faith Today. Catholic Social Vision for the 1990s* (London: DLT/Affirming Catholicism, 1994), p. 2

<sup>397</sup> Kenneth Leech, “Anglican Catholicism in Decay: The Trivializing of a Great Tradition,” in John Orens (Ed.), *Fellowship Papers. The Liberation of Orthodoxy: Contemporary Anglo-Catholic Voices* (Washington, DC: The Catholic Fellowship of the Episcopal Church, 1994), p. 27

<sup>398</sup> Leech, *The Eye of the Storm*, p. 103

<sup>399</sup> Kenneth Leech, “Blues under the pews?” *Third Way* (Vol. 1, No. 14, July 1977), pp. 22f

<sup>400</sup> Leech, *Struggle in Babylon*, p. 206

<sup>401</sup> See Kenneth Leech (Ed.), *Thatcherism. the Jubilee Lent Lectures 1980* (Milton Keynes: Jubilee Publications, 1980)

<sup>402</sup> See Kenneth Leech, “The Politics of Nationhood,” *Racial Justice* (Autumn 1985), pp. 11 ff

<sup>403</sup> See Leech, *True God*, pp. 381 f

<sup>404</sup> Kenneth Leech, *After Scarman?* (Leicester: Diocese of Leicester Board of Social Responsibility. Occasional Papers No. 1, 1981), p. 1

<sup>405</sup> Kenneth Leech, “The New Radical Right and the Church in Britain,” in David Edgar, Kenneth Leech & Paul Weller (Eds.), *The New Right and the Church* (London: Jubilee Group, 1985), p. 27



## Socialism

Leech's attitude to the Labour Party is significant although he has never joined it and Jubilee is suspicious of the Christian Socialist Movement's (CSM) affiliation to Labour.<sup>406</sup> He belongs not to Labour's reformist tradition but its revolutionary one.<sup>407</sup> His ministry began during the Left's period of dominance in Labour.<sup>408</sup> The left, like Leech, appealed to socialism's fundamentalist "political myths",<sup>409</sup> including historical "foundation myths" and the "eschatological myths" of the socialist millennium.<sup>410</sup> Meanwhile Tony Benn also referred to the Church's "prophetic role".<sup>411</sup> These radicals opposed the victory of ethical socialism under Blair,<sup>412</sup> and Leech's negative reaction<sup>413</sup> mirrors their response to Blair's new "revelation".<sup>414</sup> Although he thinks Labour has "never been a socialist party", he claims it has now abandoned even the "language".<sup>415</sup>

Leech's socialism is inspired by nineteenth century Anglo-Catholic Christian socialism and the slum ritualists, such as Stuart Headlam's Guild of St. Matthew, Conrad Noel's Catholic Crusade, and the Christendom Group. Leech called for the "resurrection of the Catholic social voice",<sup>416</sup> and the revival of "the prophetic office of the church".<sup>417</sup> While Leech acknowledged Anglo-Catholicism's actual "sickly pietism and right-wing reactionary stance",<sup>418</sup> Jubilee also challenged Christianity's

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<sup>406</sup> See Chris Bryant, *Possible Dreams. A Personal History of the British Christian Socialists* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1997), p. 300

<sup>407</sup> See A. J. Davies, *To Build a New Jerusalem. The Labour Movement from the 1850s to the 1990s* (London: Michael Joseph, 1992), p. 284

<sup>408</sup> *ibid*, p. 262

<sup>409</sup> See Henry Tudor, *Political Myth* (London: Macmillan, 1972), pp. 91 ff

<sup>410</sup> Tudor Jones, *Remaking the Labour Party. From Gaitskell to Blair* (London/New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 11 ff

<sup>411</sup> Tony Benn, *Arguments for Democracy* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1981), p. 139 f

<sup>412</sup> See Tony Blair, *New Britain. My Vision of a Young Country* (London: Fourth Estate, 1996)

<sup>413</sup> Ken Leech, *Interview 2* (6.10.97)

<sup>414</sup> Michael Barrett Brown & Ken Coates, *The Blair Revelation. Deliverance for whom?* (Nottingham: Spokesman, 1996)

<sup>415</sup> Leech, *The Sky is Red*, pp. 153 f

<sup>416</sup> Kenneth Leech, "The Resurrection of the Catholic Social Voice," *Theology* (No. 654, Dec. 1974), pp. 630 ff

<sup>417</sup> "Appendix. The Original Jubilee Manifesto 1975," in *Who Will Sound the Trumpet?*, p. v.

<sup>418</sup> Kenneth Leech, "Introduction," in *Essays Catholic and Radical*, p. 7



“woolly liberalism” on social issues.<sup>419</sup>

Leech questioned the identification of protest with “theological relativism and ‘liberalism’”,<sup>420</sup> writing that prophecy depends on an “engagement with tradition” which requires an “informed and committed community”.<sup>421</sup> Leech wrote that only “subversive orthodoxy” can ground critique,<sup>422</sup> and reasserted the political implications of doctrine. He particularly stressed the Incarnation for its positive view of matter,<sup>423</sup> although he criticises Anglican “neat incarnationalism” which hides conflict under false harmony.<sup>424</sup> During Conservative rule, however, Leech gained a fresh appreciation for doctrines like the fall, original sin, and the powers.<sup>425</sup> Although he stressed the “social and cosmic” rather than personal dimensions of sin,<sup>426</sup> Leech’s realism enabled him to deal with defeat and rescued his theology from naive optimism.

### Spirituality

Catholic influence encouraged Leech to criticise the separation of “spirituality and prophecy”,<sup>427</sup> and attack anti-political “non-Incarnational mysticism”.<sup>428</sup> Although he welcomed the 1960s spiritual revival, he felt it was “occult rather than prophetic” because it did not challenge injustice.<sup>429</sup> Charismatic Christianity likewise was seen as escapist, gnostic and sentimental.<sup>430</sup> Such unprophetic “private religions” fitted easily into “the culture of capitalism”.<sup>431</sup>

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<sup>419</sup> *ibid*, p. 8

<sup>420</sup> Leech, “Fighting social evil,” p. 24

<sup>421</sup> Leech, *The Eye of the Storm*, pp. 213 f

<sup>422</sup> Leech, *Subversive Orthodoxy*

<sup>423</sup> See Kenneth Leech, “Believing in the Incarnation,” *Theology* (No. 668, March 1976), pp. 68 ff

<sup>424</sup> Leech, *The Sky is Red*, p. 160

<sup>425</sup> Kenneth Leech, Talk at *Mission on the Margins* Conference, Birmingham (25 - 26 June 1996)

<sup>426</sup> Leech, *True God*, p. 380

<sup>427</sup> Leech, “The Resurrection of the Catholic Social Voice,” p. 637

<sup>428</sup> Leech, “Believing in the Incarnation,” p. 70

<sup>429</sup> Kenneth Leech, *Soul Friend. A Study of Spirituality* (London: Sheldon Press, 1977), p. 10

<sup>430</sup> *ibid*, 23

<sup>431</sup> Leech, *True God*, p. 22



Leech's himself prefers "darkness" to visions,<sup>432</sup> sitting in "silence" before the mystery.<sup>433</sup> In his opinion, an ecstatic was most likely to be a false prophet.<sup>434</sup> Although he thinks Old Testament prophecy included spirit possession,<sup>435</sup> he is suspicious of paranormal experience,<sup>436</sup> because it confuses the psychic and the spiritual.<sup>437</sup> For Leech, the desert is the place of revelation,<sup>438</sup> and today this means the "urban desert".<sup>439</sup> True prayer is not about internal peace, but conflict - personal and social.<sup>440</sup> Consequently, Leech criticises contemporary spiritual direction. Like counselling, it encourages people to become "adjusted" to oppression rather than overcoming it.<sup>441</sup> Instead he urges a "prophetic understanding of spiritual direction" which includes social action.<sup>442</sup>

Catholic tradition also encouraged spirituality's social aspect and the prophetic function of liturgy. Leech follows Noel's example in conceiving the Mass as a "foretaste" of God's Kingdom.<sup>443</sup> Holy Communion practised by "Holy Communists" (Headlam's phrase)<sup>444</sup> employs beauty and creativity not only in communicating solidarity, but also pointing "to glory" through imaginative social visions.<sup>445</sup> Leech's rediscovery of the Eucharist's eschatological function<sup>446</sup> is another example of bodied spirituality, showing how liturgy can liberate from present limitations.<sup>447</sup>

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<sup>432</sup> Leech, *True God*, pp. 162, 186

<sup>433</sup> Kenneth Leech, "Transforming, communicative silence," *Christian* (Epiphany 1997), p. 15

<sup>434</sup> See Leech, *True God*, p. 202

<sup>435</sup> *ibid*, p. 61

<sup>436</sup> *ibid*, p. 336

<sup>437</sup> See Leech, *The Sky is Red*, pp. 120 ff

<sup>438</sup> See Leech, *True God*, p. 34

<sup>439</sup> Kenneth Leech, "Nourishing an urban desert," *The Times* (19 March 1983), p. 10

<sup>440</sup> See Kenneth Leech, "Prayer and Conflict," *Third Way* (Vol. 9, No. 9, September 1986), pp. 16 f

<sup>441</sup> Leech *Soul Friend*, pp. 102 f

<sup>442</sup> *ibid*, pp. 187 ff

<sup>443</sup> Kenneth Leech, "Some Light from the Noel Archives," in Kenneth Leech (Ed.), *Conrad Noel and the Catholic Crusade. A Critical Evaluation* (London: Jubilee Group, 1993), p. 47

<sup>444</sup> Kenneth Leech, "Holy communists," *The Witness* (Vol. 77, No. 10, October 1994), pp. 16 f

<sup>445</sup> Leech, *Subversive Orthodoxy*, p. 42

<sup>446</sup> Leech, *True God*, p. 273

<sup>447</sup> cf. Christopher Rowland, "Eucharist as Liberation from the Present," in David Brown & Ann Loades (Eds.), *The Sense of the Sacramental. Movement and Measure in Art, Place and Time* (London: SPCK, 1995), pp. 200 ff



## Liberalism

Ironically, where liberal and traditional ethics clash, Leech supports the former, in effect elevating capitalist privatised individualistic sexual ethics over Catholic tradition. For example Leech recommends libertarian positions on sexual issues, including homosexuality, monogamy, and the “unhealthy obsession with abortion”.<sup>448</sup> Although he chastises fundamentalism’s selective attitude to Scripture,<sup>449</sup> Leech here does the same. External influences on, what Bryant calls, Jubilee’s “life-affirming and celebratory” stance<sup>450</sup> include nineteenth century socialist libertarianism, and the 1960s sexual revolution supported in Britain by the Wilson government<sup>451</sup> and reflected in the “New Left”.<sup>452</sup> Leech believes, however, in political not economic liberalism,<sup>453</sup> hence his support for the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement when the Diocese expelled it from St. Botolph’s.<sup>454</sup>

Eric Mascall wrote that adapting tradition to changing conditions has to avoid two extremes, of fixation on a particular verbal formulation and of dissociating faith from historical tradition.<sup>455</sup> Although Leech similarly writes that prophecy arises from the “dialectical relationship” between tradition and future evolution,<sup>456</sup> he recognises his departure from Mascall’s concern for truth.<sup>457</sup> In practice, like Maurice Wiles’s liberal “remaking of Christian doctrine”<sup>458</sup> Leech has relinquished one pole of Mascall’s tension, becoming vulnerable to the Catholic accusation of liberal indifferentism.<sup>459</sup> Admittedly Leech is historically continuous with the minority Anglo-Catholic

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<sup>448</sup> Leech, *The Sky is Red*, pp. 28 ff

<sup>449</sup> See Leech, *Spirituality and Pastoral Care*, p. 7

<sup>450</sup> Chris Bryant, *op cit*, p. 279

<sup>451</sup> *ibid*, p. 221

<sup>452</sup> cf. R. N. Berki, *Socialism* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1975), pp. 139 ff

<sup>453</sup> *ibid*, p. 148

<sup>454</sup> See Malcolm Johnston, *Outside the Gate. St. Botolph's and Aldgate 950 - 1994* (London: Stepney Books, 1994), p. 165

<sup>455</sup> See E. J. Mascall, *The Secularisation of Christianity* (London: DLT, 1965), p. 23

<sup>456</sup> Leech, *The Sky is Red*, p. 6

<sup>457</sup> *ibid*, p. 46

<sup>458</sup> Maurice Wiles, *The Remaking of Christian Doctrine* (London: SCM, 1974)

<sup>459</sup> cf. Roderick Strange, “Liberal Theology and the Dogmatic Principle,” *The Ampleforth Journal* (Vol. LXXX, Pt. III, Autumn 1975), pp. 5 ff



tradition of Stuart Headlam, whose sacramental attitude to dancing and sexuality countered evangelicalism's identification of pleasure with sinfulness.<sup>460</sup> Headlam's *Lux Mundi* Anglo-Catholicism, however, itself represented an accommodation with modernism,<sup>461</sup> of which *Affirming Catholicism*, supported by Leech and St. Botolph's, is a contemporary version.

### Erastianism

Although Anglo-Catholicism originates in hostility to Protestant state control of the Church,<sup>462</sup> erastian traces underlie Leech's thinking. He condemns the Constantinian concept of Church as "civic cement",<sup>463</sup> and opposes the establishment of the Church of England, saying it must accept its minority status and ally with radical groups.<sup>464</sup> His "Christian socialism" therefore differs from Anglican "social Christianity".<sup>465</sup> He also criticised the *Faith in the City* Report for its reformism, lack of theology, and its appeal to a non-existent Christian moral consensus.<sup>466</sup> So, although Leech welcomed the Church's left-ward move,<sup>467</sup> he is therefore not affected by Norman's attack on the upper class liberal determination of Anglican social thought. Leech's origins are not upper class but working class, and the influences on him are not liberalism but the revival of Marxist revolutionary socialism in the 1970s and 80s<sup>468</sup> and its reflection among radical clergy.<sup>469</sup>

<sup>460</sup> See John Orens, "Priesthood and Prophecy: the development of Anglo-Catholic Socialism," in Leech & Williams, *op cit*, p. 162

<sup>461</sup> See John R. Orens, *The Mass, the Masses, And the Music Hall: Stuart Headlam's Radical Anglicanism* (London: Jubilee Group, 1979), p. 3 f

<sup>462</sup> See Orens, "Priesthood and Prophecy," p. 160 f

<sup>463</sup> Leech, *True God*, pp. 67, 153

<sup>464</sup> See Leech, *Politics and the Faith Today*, pp. 26 ff

<sup>465</sup> cf. John Atherton (Ed.), *Social Christianity. A Reader* (London: SPCK, 1994), p. 20

<sup>466</sup> See Leech, *Struggle in Babylon*, pp. 146 ff

<sup>467</sup> See Kenneth Leech, "Is the Church of England really moving to the Left?" *Marxism Today* (October 1982), pp. 16 ff

<sup>468</sup> See Davies, *op cit*, p. 236

<sup>469</sup> See David Martin, "The Churches: Pink Bishops and the Iron Lady," in Dennis Kavanaugh & Anthony Sheldon (Eds.), *The Thatcher Effect. A Decade of Change* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 336



Leech opposes Anglicanism's support for "incremental change",<sup>470</sup> which arises from the necessary "limits" to prophecy imposed by closeness to power.<sup>471</sup> Leech himself experienced prophecy's limits while he was Race Relations Field Officer for the Board of Social Responsibility and complained "how little we have achieved".<sup>472</sup> Consequently Leech criticises the Church's "social action curias" for prioritising "research" rather than "prophetic concreteness"<sup>473</sup> - although Henry Clark (who coined the term<sup>474</sup>) insists that reformism is prophetic.<sup>475</sup> From the CSM perspective, Leech would be a "prophetic purist" avoiding political reality.<sup>476</sup> His refusal to work within the system leads CSM Chairperson, Chris Bryant to accuse Leech of possessing no "theology of power" but only of protest.<sup>477</sup> Furthermore, although he criticises the model of the "servant church" as an evasion of prophetic critique, Leech is actually dependent upon it. Brian Lee, Rector of St. Botolph's, has written a paper commending the concept;<sup>478</sup> and St. Botolph's homelessness work exploits Anglicanism's prestige to attract funds from City financial institutions.<sup>479</sup>

## Christendom

Erastianism, like civil religion, exhibits prophetic and priestly modes. Leech emphasises the former, whereas John Habgood stresses "public faith's" unitive priestly function.<sup>480</sup> Both assume the Church is not "radically discontinuous" with

<sup>470</sup> G. S. Ecclestone, *The Church of England and Politics* (London: Board of Social Responsibility/Church Information Office, 1981), pp. 54 f

<sup>471</sup> Medhurst & Moyser, *op cit*, p. 358

<sup>472</sup> Ken Leech, *The Fields of Charity and Sin. Reflections on combating racism in the Church of England. Race Relations Fieldwork Background Paper No. 6* (London: Race, Pluralism and Community Group. Board of Social Responsibility, 1984), p. 8

<sup>473</sup> Leech, *Subversive Orthodoxy*, pp. 18 f

<sup>474</sup> Clark, *The Church Under Thatcher*, p. 25

<sup>475</sup> *ibid*, p. 13

<sup>476</sup> David Cairns, "A defence of politics," in Chris Bryant (Ed.), *Restoring Faith in Politics* (London: Christian Socialist Movement, 1996), pp. 8 ff

<sup>477</sup> Chris Bryant, *Interview* (20.10.97)

<sup>478</sup> See Brian J. Lee, *The Permanent Diaconate and the Servant Church* (Unpublished Paper)

<sup>479</sup> Brian J. Lee, *Interview* (16.10.97)

<sup>480</sup> See John Habgood, "Public Faith," in John Habgood, *Confessions of a Conservative Liberal* (London: SPCK, 1988), pp. 7 ff



society.<sup>481</sup> Leech's socialist Catholic vision is a libertarian *theocratic minimalism* as opposed to conservative *theocratic maximalism*. While the former dilutes Christian morals and the latter imposes them, both regard religion functionally, and continue Christendom's project to integrate society under a single, pluralist religio-ethical framework. Although Leech now criticises Christendom,<sup>482</sup> his early writing advocated the "reintegration of Christendom",<sup>483</sup> and today his main financial supporter is the "Christendom Trust".<sup>484</sup>

Another expression of Christendom is Leech's parochial-localism. His prophetic *Manner* is theologically-informed social analysis rooted in local political praxis. Leech believes therefore that a social location among the poor is the proper context for theology.<sup>485</sup> His emphasis on East End roots provides a localist sub-societal plausibility structure for his radicalism.<sup>486</sup> Leech's localism, however, represents an earlier moment in capitalist development not an alternative to it. The economic shift from production to consumption, is reflected in politics and religion. Christian opposition to Thatcher arose mainly among those Churches employing the parochial system.<sup>487</sup> As the old left represented the values of production,<sup>488</sup> so too does the parish system's provision of standardised services regardless of demand.<sup>489</sup> Leech, Jubilee, and St. Botolph's therefore represent the "residual" ideology<sup>490</sup> of a "retrenching" working class.<sup>491</sup>

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<sup>481</sup> Wogaman, *op cit*, p. 94

<sup>482</sup> See Leech, *The Sky Is Red*, p. 69

<sup>483</sup> Leech, "What has happened to Christian Social Theology?", p. 139

<sup>484</sup> Leech, Urban theology Work at St. Botolph's, p. 4

<sup>485</sup> See Leech, *The Sky is Red*, pp. 51 ff

<sup>486</sup> See McGuire, *op cit*, p. 41

<sup>487</sup> See Davie, *op cit*, p. 21

<sup>488</sup> See Davies, *op cit*, p. 285

<sup>489</sup> See Davie, *ibid*

<sup>490</sup> Raymond Williams, *op cit*, p. 122

<sup>491</sup> cf. Schoenfeld, "Religion, Class Conflict, and Social Justice," p. 44. Note: Schoenfeld thinks the working class is axiomatically "ascending". A fluid use of his concept, however, will recognise that under late capitalism it is "retrenching".



Nevertheless, consumerism is not easy to escape. St. Botolph's is a largely Moslem parish, and Leech relates through inter-faith dialogue. The congregation however is eclectic, drawn from outside the parish boundaries, with significant numbers of (ex-) homeless and gay people. Thus this Church has its own consumer appeal, among those who enjoy tolerant Anglo-Catholicism. Leech personally embodies this idiosyncratic eclecticism with his combination of political radicalism and devotion to the Latin rite.

Can St. Botolph's conservative liturgy, however, communicate to a religiously illiterate population? What are Leech's prospects in his attempt to renew Church and society? Some have suggested he is in danger of becoming the "acceptable radical spokesperson for the Church".<sup>492</sup> There is little chance of that, however, since Leech is effectively marginalised in Aldgate. The Jubilee Group's future is also uncertain. With weak organisation people easily "drift away," and the group faces "disintegration" if key people (like Leech) are removed.<sup>493</sup> Anglo-Catholicism as a whole displays minimal political concern,<sup>494</sup> and a "cleavage" exists between its conservative and liberal sections.<sup>495</sup> Leech himself considers Anglo-Catholicism's demise very likely "in the next decade",<sup>496</sup> and regards the institutional decline of the Church itself as "perhaps terminal".<sup>497</sup> Nevertheless in the midst of "decomposition and crisis" the Church witnesses to the Kingdom.<sup>498</sup> Indeed, faced with our culture's "nihilism and despair",<sup>499</sup> Leech wonders whether the Church is called to "aid that collapse".<sup>500</sup>

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<sup>492</sup> Kenneth Leech, Talk at *Mission on the Margins* Conference

<sup>493</sup> Michael Futers, "Leaving a Trail: Priorities for the Jubilee Group in the next twenty years," in Leech, *Who Will Sound the Trumpet?*, p. 11

<sup>494</sup> See W. S. F. Pickering, *Anglo-Catholicism. A Study in Religious Ambiguity* (London: SPCK, 1991), p. 134

<sup>495</sup> Kenneth Hylson-Smith, *High Churchmanship in the Church of England, from the 16th Century to the late 20th Century* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1993), pp. 350 f

<sup>496</sup> Leech, *Politics and the Faith Today*, p. 25

<sup>497</sup> Kenneth Leech, "The new desire to believe," *The Guardian* (14 June 1997), p. 23

<sup>498</sup> Leech, *The Sky is Red*, p. 40

<sup>499</sup> *ibid*, p. 89

<sup>500</sup> *ibid*, p. 130



## CHAPTER 5

### THE CREATIONAL-PAGAN MODEL OF PROPHECY

#### GOD SPEAKS WITHIN NATURE

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### **Postmodern Spirituality**

The Creational-Pagan model of prophecy is part of a wider paradigm shift in religious sensibility.<sup>1</sup> This introduction will describe only the outlines of this emergent framework, which has a more affective spirituality and combines a positive attitude towards creation and matter with insights drawn from non-Christian, sometimes neo-pagan, religious traditions. Although it overlaps with aspects of the New Age movement, Christian expressions include Creation Spirituality and Ecofeminism.

Within the inchoate “religious awakening”<sup>2</sup> in society at large,<sup>3</sup> an intellectual reaction against postmodernism is occurring. Process theologian David Griffin<sup>4</sup> and Ecofeminists Mary Grey and Charlene Spretnak<sup>5</sup> agree that postmodernism must move to a more positive stage. This postmodern spirituality, however, is firmly planted in this world. Ontologically, instead of Platonic dualistic conceptions of a transcendent God as wholly other, the divine is reconceived immanently.<sup>6</sup> In this new synthesis, the spiritual and the material are combined in a positive valuing of bodied

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter 1, pp. 21 f

<sup>2</sup> Theodor Roszak, “Ethics, Ecstasy, and the Study of New Religions”, in Needleman and Barker, *op cit*, p. 49

<sup>3</sup> See Marilyn Ferguson, *The Aquarian Conspiracy. Personal and Social Transformation in the 1980s* (London: Paladin Books, 1982), pp. 68 ff

<sup>4</sup> See David Ray Griffin, “Introduction to SUNY Series in Constructive Postmodern Thought,” in David Ray Griffin (Ed.), *Spirituality and Society* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1988), p. x

<sup>5</sup> See Charlene Spretnak, *States of Grace. The Recovery of Meaning in the Postmodern Age* (New York: Harper San Francisco, 1991), p. 5

<sup>6</sup> See Richard Woods, “What is New Age Spirituality ?” *The Way* (Vol. 33, No. 3, July 1992), pp. 177 ff



existence.<sup>7</sup>

This materialist spirituality includes a new appreciation of our planetary context arising from the growing experience of global interrelatedness, and the deepening ecological crisis. It is not new for Christians to discover God in nature or to be concerned for the environment.<sup>8</sup> These ideas are not even incompatible with conservative evangelicalism.<sup>9</sup> The difference lies in the transition from Edwards' providence to Emerson's pantheism, from dualism to a holism which emphasises the relationship between spirit and matter.<sup>10</sup> Consequently the dominant metaphor of this new paradigm is "interconnectedness".

This is more than practical concern and draws on spiritual notions of wholeness. The utilitarian preoccupation of what is called "shallow environmentalism" with our own survival is therefore subsumed within and challenged by the resacralisation of nature in "deep ecology".<sup>11</sup> Such a change is characteristic of the postmodern "re-enchantment of the world",<sup>12</sup> and the resultant environmental spirituality is a recognised area needing research.<sup>13</sup> The note of ecological crisis though adds an apocalyptic corrective to the anodyne optimism.<sup>14</sup> Because it contains no threat of judgment, however, this is a "soft" rather than a "hard" apocalypticism.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, eschatological-millennial hope is maintained through the belief that this crisis threshold also presents an opportunity of transition to a new civilisation.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> See Griffin *op cit*, pp. 2, 17

<sup>8</sup> See Tim Cooper, *Green Christianity* (London: Spire, 1990)

<sup>9</sup> See Francis A. Schaeffer, *Pollution and the Death of Man. The Christian View of Ecology* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1970)

<sup>10</sup> See, Gordon Miller, "Jonathan Edwards' Sublime Book of Nature," *History Today* (Vol. 46, No. 7, July 1996), pp. 29 ff

<sup>11</sup> See Don Kremner, "From Shallow Environmentalism to Deep Ecology: An Issue for Human Survival", *Creation Spirituality* (Vol. VIII, No. 6, November/December 1992), pp. 9 ff

<sup>12</sup> Griffin, *op cit*, p. xiv

<sup>13</sup> See William H. Swatos Jr., "Introduction", in Swatos, *op cit*, p. 15

<sup>14</sup> See Rachel Storm, *op cit*, p. 3

<sup>15</sup> Thompson, *The End of Time*, p. 196

<sup>16</sup> See Thomas Berry, *Creative Energy. Bearing Witness For The Earth* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1988), p. 7



## New Age

Despite the stress on unity,<sup>17</sup> the paradigm respects religious diversity and pluralism, including pre-Christian traditions.<sup>18</sup> This typically postmodern plundering of the past also characterises the New Age movement. Although Matthew Fox and Mary Grey criticise aspects of the New Age, there are undoubted similarities - in terms of interconnectivity and holism, concern for the environment, global awareness, revival of past forms, and spirituality.

This link also reveals, however, the continued existence of idealist elements alongside the genuinely new materialist spirituality we have identified. Much new spirituality perpetuates the idea of a separate spiritual realm, from which revelation is received. According to whether this is conceived ontologically or merely epistemologically, this will be seen as literal or symbolic. It is, in effect, the continuation of the western neo-Platonic Hermetic mystical tradition. Consequently we see the influence of esoteric Christianity,<sup>19</sup> from gnosticism to Rudolf Steiner's concept of "supersensible knowledge".<sup>20</sup> An American element is added through the New England Transcendentalism of Ralph Waldo Emerson, and the New Thought of his disciple Ralph Waldo Trine, both of whom saw the prophet<sup>21</sup> as an inspired poet<sup>22</sup> intuiting the divine oneness.<sup>23</sup> Later Kahlil Gibran, influenced by transcendentalism, likewise construed the prophet as a poetic preacher of philosophical wisdom.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>17</sup> See Hans Kung, *Christianity. The Religious Situation of Our Time* (London: SCM, 1995)

<sup>18</sup> See John Hick, *God Has Many Names. Britain's New Religions* (London: Macmillan, 1980)

<sup>19</sup> See "Esoteric Christianity." *Gnosis. A Journal of the Western Inner Tradition* (No. 45, Fall 1997)

<sup>20</sup> Rudi Lissau, *Rudolf Steiner. Life, work, inner path and Social initiations* (Stroud: Hawthorn, 1987), p. 96

<sup>21</sup> See Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Over-Soul," in *Miscellaneous Essays. Philosophy* (Edinburgh: The New University Library, n.d.), p. 167

<sup>22</sup> See Ralph Waldo Emerson, "An Address, delivered before the Senior Class in Divinity College, Cambridge, Sunday Evening, July 15, 1838," in *The Portable Emerson* (New York: Viking, 1946), p. 58

<sup>23</sup> See Ralph Waldo Trine, *In tune with the Infinite* (London: Bell and Hyman, 1965[1899]), p. 180

<sup>24</sup> See Kahlil Gibran, *The Prophet* (London: Heinemann, 1926)



In addition, there are occultic sources for the new paradigm. Revelation, for instance, comes through channelling,<sup>25</sup> angelic visitations<sup>26</sup> and even satan.<sup>27</sup> The blend of paganism and pantheism can also lead to “godless divine revelation,” a kind of atheistic prophecy from the universe itself.<sup>28</sup> Prophecy meanwhile is equated with predictive divination; and where it does have political content this is derived, as in the Charismatic-Pentecostal model, from spiritual inspiration rather than intellectual analysis.<sup>29</sup> There is, however, also a concept of prophecy as inspired mythical interpretation of history.<sup>30</sup> For example *The Celestine Prophecy*<sup>31</sup> and *The Mayan Prophecies*<sup>32</sup> both employ the literary device of pseudonymity,<sup>33</sup> to construct allegedly ancient South American prophecies purporting to give guidance for our lives. It is never explained, however, why supposedly pre-Christian prophecies predict the end of the second Christian millennium.

### Divine Matter

The materialistic element in the new consciousness embraces an “embodied spirituality”<sup>34</sup> with a high view of ritual as a way of connecting with the divine.<sup>35</sup> Ritual can sometimes be a privatised, individualistic avoidance of social involvement,<sup>36</sup> but it can also provide a way of experiencing the interrelatedness of the world, and therefore empowering and envisioning for active participation in change.<sup>37</sup> This

<sup>25</sup> See David Spangler, *Revelation. The Birth of a New Age* (Findhorn: Findhorn Publications, 1972)

<sup>26</sup> See William Bloom, “Devas and Angels,” in Alex Walker (Ed.), *The Kingdom Within. A Guide to the Spiritual Work of the Findhorn Community* (Findhorn: Findhorn Press, 1994), pp. 109 ff

<sup>27</sup> See R. Ogilvie Crombie, “Conversations with Pan,” *ibid*, p. 103 ff

<sup>28</sup> See Bruce, *Religion in Modern Britain*, p. 110

<sup>29</sup> See Martin Ebon, *Prophecy in our time* (New York: New American Library, 1979[1968])

<sup>30</sup> See R. J. Stewart, *The Elements of Prophecy* (Shaftesbury: Element, 1990), pp. 3 ff

<sup>31</sup> See James Redfield, *The Celestine Prophecy. An Adventure* (London: Bantam Books, 1994)

<sup>32</sup> See Adrian G. Gilbert & Maurice M. Cotterell, *The Mayan Prophecies* (Shaftesbury: Element, 1995)

<sup>33</sup> See Joe Szimhart, “The Celestine Prophecy - a look at a seductive bestseller,” *Spiritual Counterfeits Project Newsletter* (Vol. 19, No. 2, Fall 1994), p. 9

<sup>34</sup> Joe Holland, “A Postmodern Vision of Spirituality and Society,” in Griffin, *op cit*, p. 50

<sup>35</sup> See Michael S. Northcott, “New Age Rites. the Recovery of Ritual,” *The Way* (Vol. 33, No. 3, July 1993), pp. 189 ff

<sup>36</sup> See David Toolan, “Harmonic Convergences and all that: New Age Spirituality,” *The Way* (Vol. 32, No. 1, January 1992), pp. 41 f

<sup>37</sup> See Alex Wildwood, “The Power of Ritual,” *Interchange* (Winter 1993), p. 3



political orientation is facilitated by Catholic sacramental and incarnational theology, which accent the Divine presence in matter.<sup>38</sup>

Other intellectual influences have formed this paradigm. Systems Theory, which sees reality as a series of interrelated parts and wholes,<sup>39</sup> has encouraged holistic approaches to environmental problems.<sup>40</sup> So has the Gaia theory, although its formulator James Lovelock has firmly resisted any religious interpretation in terms of the mother goddess.<sup>41</sup> More generally, cosmological theories from the “new physics”<sup>42</sup> have suggested that science and eastern religions, like Taoism, both see the universe holistically.<sup>43</sup> This revamped vitalism blends panpsychic paganism and pantheism,<sup>44</sup> ascribing consciousness and intentionality to nature.<sup>45</sup> Consequently, biologist, Rupert Sheldrake attributes psychic abilities to animals<sup>46</sup> and consciousness to planets.<sup>47</sup>

### Christian Theology

Roman Catholicism is perhaps the Christian tradition most likely to benefit from globalism.<sup>48</sup> This is due to its own world-wide organisation, but also its tradition of natural theology in which it is thought possible to read truth about God from nature by human reason. This has enabled a conceptual “*God Shift*”.<sup>49</sup> Thomas Berry has used cosmology’s new creation story, in relating Christian faith to contemporary

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<sup>38</sup> See Holland, *op cit*, pp. 49 ff

<sup>39</sup> See Brian C. Burrows, Alan J. Mayne & Paul Newbury, *Into the 21 st Century. A Handbook for a Sustainable Future* (Twickenham: 1991), pp. 187, 193

<sup>40</sup> See Christopher Chase, “Systems Theory. Rediscovering Nature’s Paradigm,” *CSN Creation Spirituality* (Vol. 12, No. 2, Summer 1996), pp. 37 f

<sup>41</sup> See James Lovelock, *Gaia - A New Look at Life on Earth* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1979)

<sup>42</sup> See Paul Davies, *God and the New Physics* (London: Dent, 1983)

<sup>43</sup> See Fritjof Capra, *The Tao of Physics* (London: Fontana, 1976), p. 309

<sup>44</sup> See Paul Harrison, “Pantheism and Paganism. a new symbiosis,” *Pagan Dawn* (No. 124, Lammas 1997), pp. 14 ff

<sup>45</sup> See Robert M. Torrance, *The Spiritual Quest. Transcendence in Myth, Religion, and Science* (Berkeley/Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1994), p. 265

<sup>46</sup> See Rupert Sheldrake, “The Puzzling Power of Animals,” *CSN Creation Spirituality Network Magazine* (Vol. 12, No. 1, Spring 1996), pp. 34 ff

<sup>47</sup> See Matthew Fox & Rupert Sheldrake, *The Physics of Angels. Exploring the Realm Where Science and Spirit Meet* (New York: Harper San Francisco, 1996), p. 11

<sup>48</sup> See Swatos, *op cit*, p. xiv

<sup>49</sup> See Adrian B. Smith, *The God Shift. Our Changing Perception of the Ultimate Mystery* (London: New Millennium, 1996)



ecological concerns.<sup>50</sup> He is in the Thomist tradition, but incorporates evolutionary images of nature rather than Aquinas's static depiction.<sup>51</sup> He also reverses the Thomist order of priority between the two books of revelation: Scripture and Nature.<sup>52</sup> For Berry, the latter is primary<sup>53</sup> because the new "Ecozoic Age" needs a new revelation, which science is delivering.<sup>54</sup> Two other influences on Berry were Teilhard de Chardin and Henri Bergson.<sup>55</sup> But though Berry shares Chardin's evolutionism,<sup>56</sup> Berry takes a less anthropocentric view of nature, and accents the value of matter as opposed to Chardin's spiritualised vision.<sup>57</sup> With the negative results of science now more evident,<sup>58</sup> Berry also resists Chardin's evolutionary optimism.<sup>59</sup> His attitude to non-Christian faiths is also more positive than Chardin,<sup>60</sup> regarding them as allies<sup>61</sup> in constructing a new ecological "mythic vision".<sup>62</sup>

Protestantism, especially Calvinism, is seen as responsible for the desacralisation of nature which turned it into an exploitable resource.<sup>63</sup> However, the symbolic deficit of liberal Protestantism has led to a search for new symbols based in nature,<sup>64</sup> putting liberal churches in the forefront of environmental activism.<sup>65</sup> More specific theological roots are found in three influences. Paul Tillich's theology encouraged the search for

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<sup>50</sup> See Caroline Richards, "The New Cosmology: What it really means," in Anne Lonergan & Caroline Richards (Eds.), *Thomas Berry and the New Cosmology* (Mystic, CONN: Twenty-third Publications, 1987), pp. 95 f

<sup>51</sup> See Brian Swimme & Thomas Berry, *The Universe Story. From the Primordial Flaming Forth to The Ecozoic Age* (London: Arkana, Penguin, 1992), p. 236

<sup>52</sup> See Richards, *op cit*, p. 96

<sup>53</sup> See Thomas Berry, "Twelve Principles: For Understanding the Universe and Role of the Human in the Universe Process", in Lonergan & Richards, *op cit*, p. 107

<sup>54</sup> Berry, *Creative Energy*, pp. 54 f, 89 f

<sup>55</sup> See Richards, *op cit*, p. 97

<sup>56</sup> See Christopher F. Moody, *Teilhard de Chardin and the Mystery of Christ* (London: Collins, 1966), pp. 34 ff

<sup>57</sup> See Berry, *Creative Energy*, p. 17

<sup>58</sup> See Richards, *op cit*, p. 99

<sup>59</sup> See Teilhard de Chardin, *Le Milieu Divin* (London: Fontana, 1964[1957]), p. 110

<sup>60</sup> See Teilhard de Chardin, *Let Me Explain* (London: Collins, 1970), pp. 90 ff

<sup>61</sup> See Thomas Berry, "The Earth: A New Context for Religious Unity," in Lonergan & Richards, *op cit*, p. 27 ff

<sup>62</sup> Thomas Berry, *Creative Energy*, p. 11

<sup>63</sup> See Holland, *op cit*, p. 47

<sup>64</sup> See F. W. Dillistone, *Christianity and Symbolism* (London: Collins, 1955), p. 296

<sup>65</sup> See Thomas Robbins & Dick Anthony, "Culture Crisis and Contemporary Religion," in Robbins & Anthony, *op cit*, p. 14



God as “Being-Itself”, through immanence and symbols.<sup>66</sup> Alfred North Whitehead’s process thought also contributed to an immanentist conception of God,<sup>67</sup> where God changes and evolves with the universe, becoming eventually the empathetic fellow-sufferer who understands.<sup>68</sup> Philosophical Pragmatism, as in Cornel West’s case, has also influenced postmodern theology. Pragmatism has a pietist, idealist tendency, as in Emerson; but also a radical empiricist aspect, as with William James which makes no claims about an independent spiritual reality.<sup>69</sup> Either way, personal religious experience becomes the norm for theology and, by extension, prophecy. Such inductivism characterises this model, although Ecofeminism, like liberation theology, accents the corporate, social experience and praxis of the oppressed, in this case women.

## Psychology

The empirical examination of religious and parapsychical experience was pioneered by James.<sup>70</sup> It is also echoed by Karl Rahner, drawing on the Thomist concept of “natural prophecy”;<sup>71</sup> although Rahner considered it inferior to authentic Christian prophecy, which includes the proclamation of God’s purposes.<sup>72</sup> Furthermore, Rahner extended his discussion of spirituality to include everyday mysticism.<sup>73</sup> All experience therefore becomes an “apprehension” of the divine.<sup>74</sup> Others continue the attempt to non-reductively ground religious experience psychologically.<sup>75</sup> Dreams are seen to

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<sup>66</sup> See Tillich, *Systematic Theology Volume I*, p. 237

<sup>67</sup> See Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality. An Essay in Cosmology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1929), p. 43

<sup>68</sup> *ibid*, p. 497

<sup>69</sup> See William Dean, *American Religious Empiricism* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1986), pp. 5 ff

<sup>70</sup> See William James, “Conclusion (To *A Pluralistic Universe*),” in Stephen C. Rowe (Ed.), *The Vision of James* (Rockport, Mass/Shafesbury, Dorset/Brisbane, Queensland: Element, 1996), p. 127

<sup>71</sup> See Paul Synave & Pierre Benoit, *Prophecy and Inspiration. A Commentary on the Summa Theologica II-II, Questions 171 - 178* (New York/Rome/Paris/Tournai: Desclee Company, 1961), p. 27

<sup>72</sup> See Rahner, *Prophecies and Visions*, pp. 94 f

<sup>73</sup> See Karl Rahner, *The Spirit in the Church* (London: Burns and Oates, 1979), p. 17

<sup>74</sup> See Stephen Fields, “Balthazar and Rahner on the Spiritual Senses,” *Theological Studies* (Vol. 57, No. 2, June 1996), p. 230

<sup>75</sup> See Bernard Spilka, Ralph W. Wood, Jr. & Richard L Gorsuch, *The Psychology of Religion. An Empirical Approach* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1985), p. 168



reveal one's internal "mythic structures";<sup>76</sup> and "lucid dreaming" in particular, communicates states of consciousness comparable with Buddhism<sup>77</sup> and Transcendental Meditation.<sup>78</sup>

In addition, cognitive theories emphasising non-logical epistemologies regard the "imagination" as akin to revelation.<sup>79</sup> In particular, brain hemisphericity theories suggest that the dominance of rationalism in the West may be due to our concentration on left-brain ways of knowing.<sup>80</sup> Eastern religions by contrast are thought to stimulate the use of the right-brain through meditation. This hemisphere therefore becomes linked with mystical experiences and artistic intuition.<sup>81</sup> Many scientists consequently combine their profession with mystical practice.<sup>82</sup> Current consensus rejects this absolute dichotomy between the hemispheres, but still suggests a general specialisation between two "neurosystems".<sup>83</sup>

Analytical psychology also encouraged the inward turn. Carl Jung suggested that religion has a "psychoid" basis in the "archetypes";<sup>84</sup> while Roberto Assagioli theorised the existence of the "Self" within our individual "self".<sup>85</sup> Both imply that the prophetic voice is no longer something external. Instead God speaks from the "centre

<sup>76</sup> Stanley Krippner, "Current Trends in Dreamwork," in Stanley Krippner (Ed.), *Dreamtime and Dreamwork. Decoding the Language of the Night* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1990), p. 4

<sup>77</sup> See Harry T. Hunt, "Lucid Dreaming as a Meditative State: Some evidence from Long-Term Meditators in Relation to the Cognitive-Psychological Bases of Transpersonal Phenomena," in Jayne Gackenbach & Anees A. Sheikh (Eds.), *Dream Images: A Call to Mental Arms* (Amityville, NY: Baywood Publishing Co. Inc., 1991), pp. 265 ff

<sup>78</sup> See Jayne Gackenbach, "A Developmental Model of Consciousness in Sleep: From Sleep Consciousness to Pure Consciousness," in *ibid*, pp. 287 ff

<sup>79</sup> See Craig R. Dykstra, *Vision and Character: A Christian Educator's Alternative to Kohlberg* (New York/Ramsey: Paulist Press, 1981), pp. 79 f

<sup>80</sup> See Robert E. Ornstein, *The Psychology of Consciousness* (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman & Co., 1972), pp. 49 ff

<sup>81</sup> See Peter B. C. Fenwick, "Some Aspects of the Physiology of the Mystical Experience," in John Nicholson & Brian Foss (Eds.), *Psychology Survey No. 4* (Leicester: British Psychological Society, 1983), p. 220

<sup>82</sup> See John Allan, "Science and the Spirit & the Spirit in Science. The 20th Anniversary Mystics and Scientists Conference," *Positive News* (No. 13), p. 13

<sup>83</sup> Harold W. Gordon, "Hemisphericity," in J. Graham Beaumont, Pamela M. Kenealy, & Marcus J. C. Rogers (Eds.), *The Blackwell Dictionary of Neuropsychology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), pp. 391 f

<sup>84</sup> Karl Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (London: Fontana, 1967), pp. 380 ff

<sup>85</sup> Jean Hardy, *A Psychology with a Soul. Psychosynthesis in Evolutionary Perspective* (London: Woodgrange Press, 1996), pp. 47 ff



of our being”.<sup>86</sup> Jung<sup>87</sup> and Assagioli<sup>88</sup> were clearly both influenced by Gnosticism and neo-Platonism, and this demonstrates the ambiguous relationship which the Creational-Pagan model has with Plato. Although materialist spirituality is an emerging development, the idealist tendency remains. This is because truth is now regarded pragmatically as that symbol which envisions and empowers.

### Prophecy?

Whilst there is an “emergent”<sup>89</sup> spiritual paradigm, one may ask if there is a concomitant new prophetic model? Jonathan Porritt certainly thinks Creation Spirituality has prophetic potential.<sup>90</sup> Insofar as the prophetic aspect of the new consciousness involves social action,<sup>91</sup> however, it may amount to little more than liberation theology expanded to include women and nature, but it is precisely this widening of the “horizontal basis of solidarity”,<sup>92</sup> with its alternative ontological and epistemological grounding, that produces the new prophetic understanding.

This is clear from examining the three characteristics of prophetic models. For Creational-Pagan prophecy, the *Messenger* is the universe itself, and the oppressed, particularly women and indigenous peoples. The *Message* becomes the healing of nature - ecological and egological (i.e. psychological), based on an ontology of interconnectedness and the *Manner* incorporates Dulles’s model of revelation as “new awareness” rather than social analysis.<sup>93</sup> In Troeltsch’s terms the model represents a “universal Theism”, which simultaneously elides religious distinctions and

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<sup>86</sup> Christopher Bryant, *Jung and the Christian Way* (London: DLT, 1983), p. 44

<sup>87</sup> See Jung, *op cit*, p. 87

<sup>88</sup> See Hardy, *op cit*, pp. 117 ff

<sup>89</sup> See Raymond Williams, *op cit*, pp. 124 ff

<sup>90</sup> See Jonathan Porritt, “Bringing Religious Education Down to Earth,” *Positive News* (No. 10), p. 26

<sup>91</sup> See Diarmuid O’Murchu, *The Prophetic Horizon of Religious Life* (London: Excalibur Press, 1989), p. ii; & “A New Spirituality for our Newly Emerging World (Pt. 2),” *Interchange* (Summer 1993), p. 15

<sup>92</sup> Anne Primavesi, *Interview* (20.2.97)

<sup>93</sup> See Mary Grey, *Wisdom of Fools. Seeking Revelation for Today* (London: SPCK, 1993), pp. 17 ff



extrapolates the bourgeois individualist subjectivism of pietistic “spiritual religion”.<sup>94</sup>

Whether this prophetic approach will generate successful revitalisation depends on its ability to transcend New Age individualistic consumerism and inspire collective action.<sup>95</sup>

The three examples looked at in this chapter each illustrate different aspects of the prophetic model. From his transitional position in the new paradigm’s emergence, Morton Kelsey highlights the psychologisation of prophecy. Matthew Fox demonstrates the role of ritual and bodied mysticism, and Mary Grey introduces ecological and feminist perspectives.

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<sup>94</sup> Troeltsch, *op cit* Vol. II, p. 752

<sup>95</sup> See Madeleine Bunting, “Coming of Age,” *The Guardian* (8 October 1998), pp. 2 f



## 2. MORTON T. KELSEY: PSYCHOANALYTIC SHAMANISM

### Spiritual Crisis

Morton Kelsey is an Episcopalian priest, spiritual director and Jungian psychotherapist. He is distinguished from Matthew Fox and Mary Grey by his Protestantism and his transitional position in the emergence of the new prophetic model. Entering the ministry in the 1940s, before the upsurge in alternative spiritualities of the 1960s, he exhibits more of a romantic idealist spirituality than a postmodern materialist one. Soon after his ordination, he experienced a breakdown and spiritual crisis. This he attributed to his “humanistic” understanding of priesthood as social and moral leadership,<sup>96</sup> which he gained from his father’s scientific rationalism,<sup>97</sup> and his seminary’s liberal theology. The latter “eliminated the possibility of a direct experiential encounter with divine reality”.<sup>98</sup> The conclusion, that God was “known only by inference”, could not “sustain” human beings in practice, and led inevitably to Kelsey’s own “dead end street”.<sup>99</sup>

The “Jewish Jungian Psychologist” Max Zeller provided Kelsey with a solution, suggesting that he listen to God speaking in his dreams.<sup>100</sup> Thus Kelsey began his lifelong “personal religious quest”.<sup>101</sup> Jung’s teachings became “a key to unlock the treasures of vital Christianity”.<sup>102</sup> Kelsey studied under him in Switzerland, and established a religious education and counselling ministry in his church, St. Luke’s in Monrovia, California. Then in the 1960s he moved to Notre Dame University to teach. Jung was significant because he introduced “two ways of thinking, analytical

<sup>96</sup> Morton T. Kelsey, *Prophetic Ministry. The Psychology and Spirituality of Pastoral Care* (Rockport: Mass/Shafesbury, Dorset: Element, 1991[1982]), p. 2

<sup>97</sup> Morton T. Kelsey, *Christo-Psychology* (London: DLT, 1983[1982]), p. 2

<sup>98</sup> Morton T. Kelsey, *Encounter with God. A Theology of Christian Experience* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1974), pp. 28 ff

<sup>99</sup> Morton T. Kelsey, *Transcend. A Guide to the Perennial Spiritual Quest* (Rockport, Mass/Shafesbury, Dorset: Element, 1991[1981]), p. viii

<sup>100</sup> Kelsey, *Christo-Psychology*, p. 4

<sup>101</sup> *ibid*, p. ix

<sup>102</sup> Kelsey, *Transcend*, p. ix



and symbolic thought". Through the "symbolic imagination" Jung provided Kelsey with "a method" by which one could "get intimations of God speaking through the depths".<sup>103</sup> Kelsey felt that modern people needed "both the saving power of the Christian God of love and the insights of depth psychology".<sup>104</sup> Jung's "psychoid realm", he wrote, "enables the Holy Spirit to become incarnate in our lives".<sup>105</sup> For Kelsey the Jungian unconscious and Christianity's spiritual realm were "clearly the same".<sup>106</sup>

### Intellectual Sources

Kelsey also relied on contemporary research into extra-sensory perception, or psi power. This posits a "neutral capacity" in human beings,<sup>107</sup> manifested in clairvoyance, precognition and telepathy, "to gather information without using the normal input channels of the senses and nervous system".<sup>108</sup> This ability Kelsey identified with the right brain hemisphere, which generates "pictures, images, intuitions, insights...our perceptions of nonphysical reality".<sup>109</sup> Kelsey's empirical theology here was influenced by William James' Pragmatist approach to spiritual phenomena,<sup>110</sup> judging theological truth not "by faith" but by experimentation.<sup>111</sup>

Kelsey tried to locate his method in the Western intellectual tradition, in particular Greek thought, because the Greeks had explored the "irrational aspects of life", especially dreams.<sup>112</sup> Moreover, Kelsey thought, Christ's outlook had "more in common with late Judaic and Greek thought than with early Hebrew thought".<sup>113</sup> In

<sup>103</sup> Morton T. Kelsey, *God, Dreams, and Revelation. A Christian Interpretation of Dreams* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1991), p. 173

<sup>104</sup> Kelsey, *Christo-Psychology*, p. x

<sup>105</sup> *ibid*, p. 30

<sup>106</sup> Kelsey, *Prophetic Ministry*, p. 6

<sup>107</sup> Kelsey, *Transcend*, p. 12

<sup>108</sup> *ibid*, p. 4 f

<sup>109</sup> Kelsey, *Prophetic Ministry*, p. 75

<sup>110</sup> Kelsey, *Encounter with God*, p. 106

<sup>111</sup> Kelsey, *The Other Side of Silence*, p. 40

<sup>112</sup> Kelsey, *God, Dreams, and Revelation*, p. 58

<sup>113</sup> Kelsey, *The Other Side of Silence*, p. 35



particular, Kelsey looked to Plato's approach to dreams<sup>114</sup> and prophecy as Divine madness in the *Phaedrus*.<sup>115</sup> Where Fox's Platonism is unwitting however, Kelsey's is deliberate. According to Kelsey, Plato provided a "ready made vehicle" for early Christians,<sup>116</sup> with a "unique understanding of the existence of two realms of reality and a theory of knowledge to back it up".<sup>117</sup> This possibility of two ways of knowing, one through the senses and one bypassing the senses,<sup>118</sup> supplied an epistemological basis for prophecy.

It also demonstrates Kelsey's dualism. For Kelsey, spiritual experience depended on believing in "some conception of the reality of the spiritual world, as separate from, but related to, the physical world".<sup>119</sup> Although he used the term "supernatural" to describe this realm, Kelsey did not believe in a total separation. Rather, divine "immanence"<sup>120</sup> opposed the idea of the "unknowable God".<sup>121</sup> Consequently, religious experience had "natural causes that can be observed and analyzed".<sup>122</sup> His views made him sympathetic to idealist thinkers, like Von Hugel<sup>123</sup> and Berkeley,<sup>124</sup> supporting "the idea that mind might act directly upon matter, or that spiritual (a nonphysical) reality might break through".<sup>125</sup> Events in this spiritual realm were "as real as the physical world - more real, in fact, for they could influence physical reality".<sup>126</sup> Kelsey's idealism marks him as an anti-modern dualist rather than fully postmodern.

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<sup>114</sup> Kelsey, *God, Dreams, and Revelation*, pp. 67 ff

<sup>115</sup> Kelsey, *Encounter with God*, pp. 53 f

<sup>116</sup> Kelsey, *The Other Side of Silence*, p. 104

<sup>117</sup> Kelsey, *Encounter with God*, p. 52

<sup>118</sup> Morton T. Kelsey, *The Christian and the Supernatural* (London: Search Press, 1977[1976]), pp. 14 f

<sup>119</sup> Kelsey, *The Other Side of Silence*, p. 33

<sup>120</sup> *ibid*, pp. 11 f

<sup>121</sup> *ibid*, p. 152

<sup>122</sup> Kelsey, *God, Dreams, and Revelation*, p. 86

<sup>123</sup> Kelsey, *Transcend*, pp. 33 f

<sup>124</sup> Kelsey, *Encounter with God*, pp. 73 f

<sup>125</sup> *ibid*, p. 72

<sup>126</sup> Kelsey, *Prophetic Ministry*, p. 5



Kelsey also delved into Christian tradition, looking at Origen's, Tertullian's and Augustine's teachings on dreams.<sup>127</sup> He believed that the early Church held the same view of religious experience as himself, and accused Pope Gregory of questioning the divine origination of dreams<sup>128</sup> and Aquinas for following Aristotle's emphasis on sense-data and reason at the expense of revelation.<sup>129</sup> These developments turned dreams into "God's forgotten language",<sup>130</sup> although problems began earlier, according to Kelsey, with Constantine's conversion. From then onwards it was possible, even compulsory, to be a Christian without the necessary religious experience.<sup>131</sup> Cartesian rationalism and the Reformation's emphasis on faith over experience merely confirmed the rationalist drift.<sup>132</sup> In this respect, Kelsey felt, Bultmann and Barth perpetuated Protestant prejudices.<sup>133</sup> Where Bultmann disbelieved in miracles, Barth believed but relegated them to the past.

### **Dreams and Visions**

Kelsey regarded the contents of spiritual experience as symbols. Dreams therefore were like "cartoons and/or parables",<sup>134</sup> which depicted myths, archetypes - Augustine's "ideae principales".<sup>135</sup> For Kelsey, this rescued Christianity from liberalism and doubt. He wrote, "myth is the way human beings talk about their religious encounter with God and the spiritual world. If you demythologise Christianity it will become meaningless and poverty stricken."<sup>136</sup> Against the accommodation of Barth and Bultmann with scientism, Kelsey believed "a conscious, remythologized Christian Faith"<sup>137</sup> would persuade the "agnostic students of Notre

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<sup>127</sup> See Kelsey, *God, Dreams, and Revelation*, pp. 107 ff

<sup>128</sup> *ibid*, p. 142

<sup>129</sup> *ibid*, p. 134

<sup>130</sup> *ibid*, p. 158

<sup>131</sup> Kelsey, *Encounter with God*, p. 134

<sup>132</sup> *ibid*, p. 30

<sup>133</sup> *ibid*, pp. 88 f

<sup>134</sup> Kelsey, *God, Dreams, and Revelation*, p. 175

<sup>135</sup> *ibid*, p. 177

<sup>136</sup> Kelsey, *Transcend*, p.72

<sup>137</sup> Kelsey, *Prophetic Ministry*, p. 163



Dame”<sup>138</sup>

Dreams are the chief source of symbols for Kelsey, although he complains that “few christian theologians have dealt with the revelatory quality of dreams and visions”.<sup>139</sup> In contrast earlier Christians thought dreams could “give religious insight, wisdom and direction”.<sup>140</sup> Kelsey supported Jung’s contention against Freud therefore, that dreams did not censor reality but revealed it.<sup>141</sup> Through dreams, believed Kelsey, we are “immersed in a world in which angels, demons and even God, might speak”. Moreover dreams provided apologetic support, the “best evidence for the existence of another level of reality”, because dream content was “not thought out, coloured or invented”.<sup>142</sup>

Dreams constituted a “spontaneously altered state of consciousness”.<sup>143</sup> Kelsey identified several types of dream experience:

1. vivid dreaming;
2. secondary process mentation, unconscious problem-solving;
3. hypnogogic and hypnopompic imagery while waking or falling asleep;
4. the waking dream or vision;
5. the day dream, unlike fantasy because undirected.

The dream content itself occurs at various levels:

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<sup>138</sup> Kelsey, *God, Dreams, and Revelation*, p. 213

<sup>139</sup> *ibid*, p. 10

<sup>140</sup> *ibid*, p. 27

<sup>141</sup> Kelsey, *Christo-Psychology*, pp. 25 f

<sup>142</sup> Kelsey, *The Other Side of Silence*, p. 165

<sup>143</sup> Kelsey, *Transcend*, p. 23



1. memory content;
2. enacted dramas which communicate wisdom;
3. cross cultural archetypes;
4. numinous experiences;
5. ESP;
6. revelations of ultimate reality.<sup>144</sup>

Kelsey held that there was “no clear-cut distinction” between dreams and visions. “Dream” described merely the (sleeping) “mode or experience”, while “vision” described the “content, the substance”.<sup>145</sup> Furthermore visions differed from hallucinations, because visions were not confused with ordinary consciousness. Rather, visionary images were “superimposed on the physical world”.<sup>146</sup>

For Kelsey, “contact with spiritual reality” was made by “the faculty of the imagination”<sup>147</sup> to which meditative visualisation was essential. Where eastern meditation involved detachment, Kelsey maintained that western meditation “understands the image as a form of psychoid reality that cannot be superseded”.<sup>148</sup> Consequently, Kelsey promoted art in meditation,<sup>149</sup> rather than St. John of the Cross’s ascetic imageless contemplation.<sup>150</sup> He consequently identified three types of meditation:<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Kelsey, *The Other Side of Silence*, pp. 171 ff

<sup>145</sup> Kelsey, *God, Dreams, and Revelation*, p. 53

<sup>146</sup> Kelsey, *Transcend*, pp. 46 ff

<sup>147</sup> Kelsey, *Encounter with God*, p. 187

<sup>148</sup> Kelsey, *Prophetic Ministry*, p. 76

<sup>149</sup> Kelsey, *The Other Side of Silence*, pp. 26 ff

<sup>150</sup> *ibid*, p. 158

<sup>151</sup> *ibid*, pp. 131 ff



1. “sacramental meditation”, through ritual,<sup>152</sup>
2. imageless meditation;
3. meditation on images, including mental images.

Kelsey accepts that both eastern and western meditation are “valid”, but believes the latter promotes a personal view of “ultimate reality as lover”.<sup>153</sup> Here meditation is a way to “prepare so that God can break through to us”.<sup>154</sup> Borrowing from Assagioli’s idea of inner dialogue,<sup>155</sup> Kelsey advocates using the creative imagination to construct an “encounter with the risen Christ”.<sup>156</sup>

### **Prophecy**

In addition to dreams and visions, Kelsey also refers to “auditory experiences” of God speaking to us. Then when the “individual becomes the subject through which the speaking is done”, this becomes actual “prophecy.” Opposing Bultmann’s “mythological” view of prophecy,<sup>157</sup> Kelsey portrayed Old Testament prophets as “seers” and wrote, “the main task of the seer was to see and understand the imaginary realities - to know angels, to hear God’s voice, and to see visions”.<sup>158</sup> Kelsey believed that “psychologically there is little difference between having the visual screen possessed by images, and possession of the motor centers which results in speech”. What was important was not the “actual images”, but the “prophetic ability to see their significance”.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> *ibid*, p. 25

<sup>153</sup> *ibid*, p. 2

<sup>154</sup> *ibid*, p. 8

<sup>155</sup> Kelsey, *Transcend*, pp. 137 ff

<sup>156</sup> *ibid*, p. 24

<sup>157</sup> Kelsey, *Encounter with God*, p. 32

<sup>158</sup> Kelsey, *God, Dreams, and Revelation*, pp. 33 ff

<sup>159</sup> *ibid*, p. 45



At Notre Dame Kelsey taught a course on religious experience entitled, “The Prophetic Role in Religious Instruction”.<sup>160</sup> Generally, he saw “Prophetic Ministry” as an expression of the healing ministry, involving counselling, pastoral care and spiritual direction.<sup>161</sup> For Kelsey, the minister’s role was to “mediate” spiritual reality to people, not merely “ideas about spiritual reality”,<sup>162</sup> although he distinguished between being “authoritative mediators and being authoritarian”.<sup>163</sup> Particular issues Kelsey addresses under prophetic ministry include ministry to the lonely, the homosexual, the violent, the dying and the bereaved.<sup>164</sup>

Others also perceive counselling as a prophetic calling. For example Brian Thorne, Head of Counselling at East Anglia University is influenced by De Chardin and Fox. He writes of the “Counsellor-Prophet”,<sup>165</sup> who helps students deal with the pressures of a materialistic society,<sup>166</sup> and criticises “punitive religion” which condemns people for their sexuality.<sup>167</sup> Charismatics like John and Paula Sandford also see a prophetic dimension to counselling, and rely on words of knowledge during counselling sessions.<sup>168</sup> Although they are influenced by Jung,<sup>169</sup> however, their evangelical base causes them to oppose parapsychology and the occult.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Kelsey, *Encounter with God*, p. 11

<sup>161</sup> See Kelsey, *Prophetic Ministry*

<sup>162</sup> *ibid*, p. 10

<sup>163</sup> *ibid*, p. 12

<sup>164</sup> *ibid*, pp. 114 ff

<sup>165</sup> Brian Thorne, *The Counsellor as Prophet. 1994 the Frank Lake Memorial Lecture* (Oxford: Clinical Theology Association. Lingdale Papers 21, 1996), p. 8

<sup>166</sup> *ibid*, p. 5

<sup>167</sup> *ibid*, p. 2

<sup>168</sup> See John and Paula Sandford, *The Elijah Task. A Call to Today’s Prophets* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1977), pp. 37 ff

<sup>169</sup> See John and Paula Sandford, *The Transformation of the Inner Man* (Tulsa, OK: Victory House Inc., 1982), p. 302

<sup>170</sup> See Sandford, *The Elijah Task*, pp. 157 ff



## Shamanism

Kelsey also sees healing and therapy as a shamanic practice.<sup>171</sup> Drawing on Carlos Castaneda<sup>172</sup> and Mircea Eliade,<sup>173</sup> he sees the shaman as “a mentor or guide” on the “journey inward”.<sup>174</sup> The shaman therefore functions as an “intermediary between the people of his culture and the spiritual forces of the universe”.<sup>175</sup> Kelsey however psychologises shamanic cosmology to accommodate modern sensibilities, writing that “going back and forth among the three worlds can be compared to a breakthrough into other realms of consciousness, known today as altered states of consciousness”.<sup>176</sup> Furthermore, Kelsey argues that Plato’s doctrine of prophetic madness provided a “philosophical statement of shamanism”.<sup>177</sup>

Kelsey also believed that Old Testament prophets induced shamanic trance-like states in themselves.<sup>178</sup> Their hostility to shamanic practices he attributes solely to shamanism’s place within Canaanite pagan religions.<sup>179</sup> Nevertheless, he identifies a difference between shamanism and Christianity. Whereas the shamanic role was limited to the “specially elect”,<sup>180</sup> in a “mature religion” like Christianity the individual is stressed over the collective.<sup>181</sup> Christ was the “ultimate shaman”, and “transcends the limited mortal role of the shaman in primitive cultures”. By following Him, the Christian shaman can “channel images of healing and wholeness”, and become “the means or form by which a religious archetype is lived out and diffused... a symbol of the holy in their midst”.<sup>182</sup> Consequently, writes Kelsey, “every Christian who allows

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<sup>171</sup> Kelsey, *The Christian and the Supernatural*, p. 20

<sup>172</sup> *ibid*, p. 93

<sup>173</sup> Kelsey, *Prophetic Ministry*, p. 44

<sup>174</sup> Kelsey, *Transcend*, p. 211

<sup>175</sup> *ibid*, p. 214

<sup>176</sup> *ibid*, p. 215

<sup>177</sup> Morton T. Kelsey, *Psychology, Medicine and Christian Healing* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), p. 30

<sup>178</sup> Morton T. Kelsey, *Companions on the Inner Way. The Art of Spiritual Guidance* (New York: Crossroad, 1986[1985]), p. 116

<sup>179</sup> Kelsey, *Prophetic Ministry*, p. 39

<sup>180</sup> Kelsey, *Encounter with God*, p. 48

<sup>181</sup> *ibid*, p. 50

<sup>182</sup> Kelsey, *Transcend*, pp. 217 f



the Spirit to move in him or her is a shaman".<sup>183</sup> Because Christians still need spiritual guidance, however, the Church minister also has a shamanic role.<sup>184</sup> This is the archetype of the "Priest-shaman", which Kelsey believes is his own vocation - "my dominant archetype".<sup>185</sup>

### **Discernment**

Kelsey believed that his view of religious experience, common to "all of the major religions",<sup>186</sup> was a form of "natural religion".<sup>187</sup> He criticises those Christians who worry that other religions have such experiences. For him, Christianity has "no corner on spiritual truth, on religious perception". It "does not offer exclusive contact with the spiritual realm". Indeed Christianity is itself dependent upon the primary "universal reality of the spiritual world".<sup>188</sup> In Scripture, Kelsey found "no blanket condemnation of any practice".<sup>189</sup> Canaanite "polytheistic imagery" represented only differing aspects of the self.<sup>190</sup>

Kelsey nevertheless differentiated between good and bad experiences. Whereas the Old Testament listed criteria for this, he favoured the New Testament dualistic emphasis on the source, i.e. "which aspect of spiritual reality" lay behind the experience.<sup>191</sup> Although there was one spiritual reality, Kelsey believed it contained "darkness" and "destructive forces", as well as good. Whether a spiritual practice was good depended on the use it was put to.<sup>192</sup> Although authentic religion contained the same experiential reality as magic or divination, in these the experience was sought

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<sup>183</sup> *ibid*, p. 220

<sup>184</sup> *ibid*, p. 219

<sup>185</sup> Kelsey, *Christo-Psychology*, p. 135

<sup>186</sup> Kelsey, *God, Dreams, and Revelation*, p. 20

<sup>187</sup> *ibid*, p. 25

<sup>188</sup> *ibid*, p. 56

<sup>189</sup> Kelsey, *The Christian and the Supernatural*, p. 85

<sup>190</sup> Kelsey, *Christo-Psychology*, p. 50

<sup>191</sup> Kelsey, *God, Dreams, and Revelation*, p. 98

<sup>192</sup> Kelsey, *The Other Side of Silence*, p. 40



“for one’s own ego purposes”.<sup>193</sup> Moreover “living only in the psychic realm and having inadequate contact with material reality” would cause psychosis.<sup>194</sup>

In practice Kelsey saw “no reason” why Christians should not practice Zen, or Transcendental Meditation, or Yoga.<sup>195</sup> However, he stressed the need to be part of a tradition,<sup>196</sup> and if only because of the west’s “big investment” in Christianity, Kelsey felt Christianity should be the practice here.<sup>197</sup> Nevertheless, he did suggest positive measures to weigh religious experiences; including rootedness in a tradition, the quality of love, its fruits, and the absence of depression.<sup>198</sup> Negatively he also warned against using psi power for personal profit or control, and stressed the need to control the forces unleashed.<sup>199</sup>

Kelsey warned against being too judgmental against spiritual experience because this would exclude people from the Church, as happened with Mary Baker Eddy.<sup>200</sup> This attitude also typified his attitude to the charismatic movement. He welcomed renewal as a way of gaining “experience of God and the Holy Spirit to verify the theology and the dogma”,<sup>201</sup> but he opposed Pentecostalism’s “structured subculture” and advocated his own “alternative” to their “naive approach”.<sup>202</sup> Although *Encounter with God* was welcomed as support for charismatic experience, Kelsey’s Jungian framework made him ultimately comfortable with a wider range of spiritual phenomena than were charismatics. Kelsey himself criticised the tendency of conservative Christians, whether fundamentalist or Pentecostal, to demonise those they disagreed with.<sup>203</sup> He

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<sup>193</sup> Kelsey, *Transcend*, p. 6

<sup>194</sup> *ibid*, p. 27

<sup>195</sup> Kelsey, *The Other Side of Silence*, p. 57

<sup>196</sup> *ibid*, p. 193

<sup>197</sup> *ibid*, p. 196

<sup>198</sup> Kelsey, *Christo-Psychology*, pp. 137 f

<sup>199</sup> Kelsey, *The Christian and the Supernatural*, pp. 117 ff

<sup>200</sup> *ibid*, p. 142

<sup>201</sup> Kelsey, *Encounter with God*, pp. 24 f

<sup>202</sup> *ibid*, pp. 35 f

<sup>203</sup> Kelsey, *The Christian and the Supernatural*, p. 20



too was attacked by them regarding his shamanism<sup>204</sup> and Platonism.<sup>205</sup> He in turn accused his critics of having “no place for God working in the world today”.<sup>206</sup>

## Context

Although Kelsey’s spiritual path began after World War Two, his writing became popular with the 1960s “religious revival” among youth<sup>207</sup>. His openness to new spiritualities is part of this century’s turn to the east in American religion.<sup>208</sup> This, and his sympathy for Native American spirituality,<sup>209</sup> and his recent publisher (Element), suggest an affinity with the New Age Movement. His adoption of shamanism is similarly an aspect of its translation from the object of academic anthropological study to its acceptance within popular culture.<sup>210</sup> Fox underwent a shamanic Vision Quest during his imposed silence,<sup>211</sup> and Berry advocates a shamanic consciousness to comprehend the ecological crisis.<sup>212</sup> Meanwhile sociologist Kyriacos Markides equates shamanism with Greek Orthodox mysticism.<sup>213</sup>

The transition from traditional cultures to urban, technological society has been problematical.<sup>214</sup> Shamanic healer, Barry Cottrell feels there has been distortion<sup>215</sup> so that, without social support structures, the dangers of encountering hostile psychic

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<sup>204</sup> See Dave Hunt & T. A. McMahon, *The Seduction of Christianity. Spiritual Discernment in the Last Days* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1985), pp. 128 ff

<sup>205</sup> See Ranald Macaulay & Jerram Barrs, *Christianity with a Human Face* (Leicester: IVP, 1978), pp. 47 ff

<sup>206</sup> Kelsey, *Psychology, Medicine, and Christian Healing*, p. 20

<sup>207</sup> Kelsey, *Encounter with God*, p. 15

<sup>208</sup> See Sydney E. Ahlstrom, “From Sinai to the Golden Gate: The Liberation of Religion in the Occident,” in Needleman & Barker, *op cit*, p. 4

<sup>209</sup> See Morton T. Kelsey, *Dreamquest. Native American Myth and the Recovery of Soul* (Rockport, MA/Shafesbury, Dorset: Element, 1992)

<sup>210</sup> See I. M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion. An Anthropological Study of Spirit Possession and Shamanism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971), p. 21

<sup>211</sup> See Fox, “Creation Spirituality and the Dreamtime,” in *Wrestling with the Prophets*, p. 136

<sup>212</sup> See Berry, *Creative Energy*, p. 72

<sup>213</sup> See Kyriacos C. Markides, *Riding the Lion. In Search of Mystical Christianity* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1994), pp. 208 ff

<sup>214</sup> See Neville Drury, *The Elements of Shamanism* (Shafesbury, Dorset: Element, 1989), pp. 99 f

<sup>215</sup> See Barry Cottrell, *Thresholds Between Worlds* (Oxford: Abzu Press, 1994), pp. 13 f



entities and the abuse of power may be unrecognised.<sup>216</sup> Ecofeminist Gloria Orenstein also asserts that contemporary abstract models of shamanism ignore the bodied experience of female shamans, and their social role.<sup>217</sup> Such spiritual idealism, as in Kelsey, arises from dislocating shamanism from its communal function and religious context.<sup>218</sup> This reduces it to a manipulable technique for individualistic problem-solving, and replaces the intellectual role of the shaman in the tribe with romanticised intuitionism.

Kelsey's psychologisation of shamanism is repeated by Michael Harner, who suggests an alternate "Shamanic State of Consciousness" alongside the ordinary one.<sup>219</sup> He and Kelsey illustrate the internalisation of spiritual experience. Kelsey writes, "factual truth describes outer physical reality, myth dictates inner spiritual reality".<sup>220</sup> Rather than having external objective referents (God, angels et.), for Kelsey dream contents are "part of our own personality".<sup>221</sup> Although reacting against rationalism, Kelsey only discovers a place for religion in the space permitted in rationalism's left-over areas - the irrational. His attempt to base faith on an "understanding of the world which intelligent people can accept"<sup>222</sup> is an accommodation to Schleiermacher's "cultured despisers of religion".<sup>223</sup>

This psychologisation of religion also reflects the therapy culture of late capitalism, in which people's alienation is modulated to keep them content.<sup>224</sup> Kelsey reveals the social context of his ministry in "a comfortable parish in suburban Los Angeles,

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<sup>216</sup> See Barry Cottrell, *The Quest for Power. Shamanism and the New Age* (Oxford: Abzu Press, 1995), pp. 15, 22 f

<sup>217</sup> See Gloria Feman Orenstein, "Towards an Ecofeminist Ethic of Shamanism and the Sacred," in Adams, *op cit*, pp. 173 ff

<sup>218</sup> See Michael Ripinsky-Naxon, *The Nature of Shamanism. Substance and Function of a Religious Metaphor* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993), pp. 9, 64

<sup>219</sup> See Michael Harner, *The Way of the Shaman* (New York: HarperCollins, 1990), pp. 46 ff

<sup>220</sup> Kelsey, *Transcend*, p. 72

<sup>221</sup> Kelsey, *Transcend*, p. 19

<sup>222</sup> Kelsey, *Encounter with God*, p. 226

<sup>223</sup> See Schleiermacher, *op cit*

<sup>224</sup> See Joel Kovel, "Therapy in Late Capitalism," *Telos* (No. 30, Winter 1976-77), pp. 73 ff



and...in the academic community”.<sup>225</sup> More than Fox, Kelsey expresses a Californian bourgeois ethos; supplying psycho-spiritual placebos during the period of post-war middle class ascendancy. Unlike Fox and Grey, Kelsey has no social critique. He restricts his comments to individualistic charity, giving “liberally of your material goods”.<sup>226</sup> Harvey Cox’s has criticised shamanism in Korean Christianity for containing no social application,<sup>227</sup> and evidence suggests that Korean shamans do stress individual solutions over collective. Shamanism is therefore ideally suited to western capitalist individualism.<sup>228</sup> As New Age shaman Lynn Andrews observes, her courses are more popular among military and business communities than academics.<sup>229</sup> She and Kelsey are more implicated in materialistic capitalism than they realise.

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<sup>225</sup> Kelsey, *The Other Side of Silence*, p. 45

<sup>226</sup> Kelsey, *Encounter with God*, p. 207

<sup>227</sup> See Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, p. 234

<sup>228</sup> See Poulantzas, *Political Power and Social Classes*, p. 219

<sup>229</sup> See Jerry Snider, “Shamans of the Twentieth Century. An Interview with Lynn Andrews,” *Magical Blend* (No. 53, January 1997), p. 34



### 3. MATTHEW FOX: CREATION SPIRITUALITY

#### Original Blessing

Matthew Fox is the great populariser, if not originator of Creation Spirituality. Originally a Dominican Priest, Fox founded the Institute in Culture and Creation Spirituality in Chicago in the 1970s, but later moved it to Holy Names College in Oakland, California. Through his work during the 1980s, he developed a “Creation-centred spirituality”, until the Vatican imposed a year’s silence on him. After being expelled from the Dominican Order, he was received into the Episcopalian Church, and set up a new structure - the University of Creation Spirituality in 1996.

Fox’s *Message* opposes what he calls “Fall-Redemption Theology”,<sup>230</sup> which he thinks owes more to Plato than Jesus.<sup>231</sup> Such theology, he asserts, is a dualistic depiction of God as separate from creation<sup>232</sup> in which matter is represented as inherently evil, especially as it affects our sexuality, and salvation then becomes a matter of escaping to some other realm. Such dualism is the basis of all human sin, social divisions and exploitation.<sup>233</sup> In contrast, Fox describes the “original blessing” of creation. Fox’s Catholicism, however, resists a purely pantheistic conception of God. Instead his version of panentheism pictures God within but not exhausted by nature. Like Berry, he maintains there are two books of God’s revelation.<sup>234</sup> For Fox, however, God’s presence is not always apparent; and so in contrast to pantheism, panentheism requires ritual to draw out the sacramentality of nature.<sup>235</sup>

<sup>230</sup> Matthew Fox, *Original Blessing. A Primer in Creation Spirituality* (Santa Fe, NM: Bear & Co., 1983), p. 11

<sup>231</sup> See Matthew Fox, *Whee! We, Wee All The Way Home. A Guide to Sensual, Prophetic Spirituality* (Santa Fe, NM: Bear & Co., 1981[1976]), p. 197

<sup>232</sup> See Matthew Fox, “Creation Spirituality: Three hundred Years from Hildegard to Julian,” *Creation Spirituality* (Vol. XI, No. 3, Autumn 1995), p. 15

<sup>233</sup> See Fox, *Original Blessing*, p. 296

<sup>234</sup> *ibid*, p. 290

<sup>235</sup> *ibid*, p. 90



In constructing a spirituality that values the material, Fox utilises the Catholic notion of spiritual “Paths”, but he goes beyond negative neo-Platonic mysticism which stressed the “via purgativa”. Instead, he suggests “four paths”:<sup>236</sup>

1. the “via positiva”, the valuing of the creation;<sup>237</sup>
2. the “via negativa”, which sounds like the “via purgativa”, but is the confrontation and “letting go” of our own inauthentic existence;<sup>238</sup>
3. the “via creativa”, the exploration of our own creativity;<sup>239</sup>
4. the “via transformativa”, the prophetic call of the Holy Spirit for social justice.<sup>240</sup>

### Spiritualities

The *Manner* of Fox’s prophetic spirituality embraces the idea of “ecstasy”. God is not found through other-worldly spiritual experience, but through sensual pleasure.<sup>241</sup> However, whereas in pre-industrial society ecstasy was experienced naturally, today we need to cultivate deliberate “tactical ecstasies”.<sup>242</sup> Revealing his counter-cultural roots, Fox writes that the ecstatic “high”<sup>243</sup> is achieved through ritual, music, art, drugs, and sex.<sup>244</sup> He does not reject the implicit hedonism, since a “sensuous prophetic spirituality”<sup>245</sup> would share pleasure rather than selfishly hoarding it.<sup>246</sup> This contrasts with what Fox calls “sick mysticism”,<sup>247</sup> which produces one-sided “pseudoprophetic” denunciations of birth control and sexuality.<sup>248</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> *ibid*, p. 26

<sup>237</sup> *ibid*, pp. 31 ff

<sup>238</sup> *ibid*, pp. 127 ff

<sup>239</sup> *ibid*, pp. 173 ff

<sup>240</sup> *ibid*, pp. 257 ff

<sup>241</sup> Fox, *Whee! We, Wee*, p. 219

<sup>242</sup> *ibid*, p. 63

<sup>243</sup> *ibid*, p. 43

<sup>244</sup> *ibid*, p. 6

<sup>245</sup> *ibid*, p. 3

<sup>246</sup> *ibid*, p. 12

<sup>247</sup> Matthew Fox, *On Becoming a Musical, Mystical Bear. Spirituality American Style* (New York: Paulist Press/Makwah: Deus Books, 1976[1972]), pp. 94 f

<sup>248</sup> Matthew Fox, *Confessions. The Making of a Post-Denominational Priest* (New York: Harper San Francisco, 1996), pp. 232 f



In Fox's view therefore we face an apocalypse<sup>249</sup> because our symbolic system meets neither the psychic needs of the culture,<sup>250</sup> nor the requirements of the ecological disaster.<sup>251</sup> Quoting Robert Bellah's work on civil religion, he asserts, however, that a religious revival may avert catastrophe, and perhaps even bring in a new era.<sup>252</sup> In the 1970s, he associated this era with the "Aquarian" age.<sup>253</sup> Today, still seeking appropriate metaphors, he sees it as "postmodern",<sup>254</sup> and wants his university to "reinvent education" for this cultural shift.<sup>255</sup>

Expressing this model's emphasis on "interrelatedness",<sup>256</sup> Fox draws on insights from the new physics,<sup>257</sup> biology,<sup>258</sup> and psychological theories like brain hemisphericity.<sup>259</sup> Philosophically he looks to the "American" tradition<sup>260</sup> of transcendentalism,<sup>261</sup> as well as process thought.<sup>262</sup> Theologically, he also owes a debt to De Chardin<sup>263</sup> and Berry. Indeed Fox might be deemed the prophet who spoke the revelation which Berry received.<sup>264</sup> M. D. Chenu, his doctoral supervisor in Paris, was, however, a greater

<sup>249</sup> See Matthew Fox, "Is Creation Spirituality 'New Age'?" in *Wrestling with the Prophets. Essays on Creation Spirituality and Everyday Life* (New York: Harper San Francisco, 1995), p. 290

<sup>250</sup> See Fox, *On Becoming a Musical, Mystical Bear*, pp. xxvii f

<sup>251</sup> See Matthew Fox, "Creation Spirituality and the Dreamtime," in *Wrestling with the Prophets*, p. 136

<sup>252</sup> See Matthew Fox, "Creation-Centered Spirituality from Hildegard to Julian: Three Hundred Years of an Ecological Spirituality in the West," in *Wrestling with the Prophets*, p. 99 n. 98

<sup>253</sup> Fox, *Whee! We, wee*, P. 4

<sup>254</sup> Matthew Fox, "Creation Spirituality: Here Come the Postmoderns," *Creation Spirituality* (Vol. XI, No. 3, Autumn 1995), pp. 4 f

<sup>255</sup> Matthew Fox, "The University of Creation Spirituality," *CSN Creation Spirituality Network Magazine* (Vol. 12, No. 1, Spring 1996), pp. 16 ff

<sup>256</sup> Matthew Fox, "Meister Eckhart and Karl Marx: The Mystic as Political Theologian," in *Wrestling with the Prophets*, p. 183

<sup>257</sup> See Matthew Fox, "Creation Mysticism and the Return of a Trinitarian Christianity: Theology in Ecological Perspective", in *Wrestling with the Prophets*, p. 54

<sup>258</sup> I attended: Matthew Fox & Rupert Sheldrake, *Natural Grace. Dialogues on Science and Spirituality*, in St. James's Church, Piccadilly, London (4 th June, 1996)

<sup>259</sup> See Claudio Naranjo & Robert Ornstein, *On the Psychology of Meditation* (New York: Viking Press, 1972); quoted in Matthew Fox, "Deep Ecumenism, Ecojustice, and Art as Meditation," in *Wrestling with the Prophets*, p. 225

<sup>260</sup> Matthew Fox, *Confessions*, p. 134

<sup>261</sup> See Wayne G. Boulton, "Bringing Matthew Fox in from the Cold," *Theology Today* (Vol. 48, No. 3, October 1991), p. 270 f

<sup>262</sup> See Fox, *Original Blessing*, p. 25

<sup>263</sup> See Fox, *Original Blessing*, p. 88

<sup>264</sup> Madeleine O'Callaghan, teacher at *Wisdom For An Evolving Planet. A 5 week evening course in Creation Spirituality* (St. James Church, Piccadilly, London: 18 th Sept. - 16 th Oct. 1996): which I attended.



personal influence. He coined the term “Creation Spirituality”,<sup>265</sup> because of his desire, common among Catholics in the 1960s, to positively value the material existence of humanity.<sup>266</sup> For Chenu, this entailed discerning the sacramental presence of God within trade unionism.<sup>267</sup> Fox’s work has progressed differently, although he still affirms the importance of justice. Beginning from the same valuation of matter, Fox developed its possibilities for the direct experience of God rather than social transformation.

### Influences

Furthermore, Fox’s religious outlook is not limited to Christianity. He is a passionate advocate of “deep ecumenism”,<sup>268</sup> valuing the contributions of eastern religions, such as Taoism,<sup>269</sup> in recovering a creation-centred perspective. In particular, Fox thinks that Native American spirituality has emphasised divine communication through nature in general and especially animals.<sup>270</sup> This illustrates Fox’s connection with New Age views,<sup>271</sup> although he criticises its individualistic self-centredness, anti-intellectualism, and lack of social awareness.<sup>272</sup> Fox’s eclecticism has led to charges that he misrepresents his sources.<sup>273</sup> Whilst this is true, John Cobb Jr. defends him<sup>274</sup> because Fox’s work nevertheless illuminates and clarifies the implicit Creation Spirituality tradition within all faiths as a contemporary resource.<sup>275</sup>

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<sup>265</sup> Fox, *Confessions*, pp. 69 f

<sup>266</sup> See M. D. Chenu, “The Spirituality of Matter,” in *Faith and Theology* (Dublin/Sydney: Gill & Son, 1968), pp. 106 ff

<sup>267</sup> See M. D. Chenu, “Classes and the Mystical body,” *ibid*, pp. 185 ff

<sup>268</sup> Fox, “Deep Ecumenism, Ecojustice, and Art as Meditation,” pp.215 ff

<sup>269</sup> See Fox, *Original Blessing*, pp. 71 f

<sup>270</sup> See Matthew Fox, “Native Teachings: Spiritual Reality with Power,” in *Wrestling with the Prophets*, p. 120

<sup>271</sup> See Margaret Brearley, “Matthew Fox and the Cosmic Christ,” *Anvil* (Vol. 9, No. 1, 1992), p. 52

<sup>272</sup> See Matthew Fox, “Is Creation Spirituality ‘New Age’?” in *Wrestling with the Prophets*, pp. 289 ff

<sup>273</sup> See Rosemary Radford Ruether, “Creation Spirituality: the Message and the Movement,” *Creation* (Vol. VI, No. 6, November-December 1990), pp. 20, 37; & Douglas Gay, “York II and Fox,” *Gospel and Culture Newsletter* (November 1996), p. 3

<sup>274</sup> See John Cobb Jr., “John Cobb Jr.,” *Creation Spirituality* (Vol. IX, No. 4/5, Summer/Fall 1993), p. 15

<sup>275</sup> See Fox, *Original Blessing*, p. 28



Fox employs ideas in postmodern, pragmatic fashion, as toolboxes for constructing Creation Spirituality. For example, despite his criticisms,<sup>276</sup> Fox depends on Augustinian neo-Platonism<sup>277</sup> which for example leads him to identify Angels with prophetic inspiration.<sup>278</sup> Chenu similarly used emanationism to illustrate the articulation of “temporality and eternity”, but opposed Platonism’s philosophical idealism.<sup>279</sup> Fox’s prophecy entails a non-dualistic notion of truth, as symbolic not literal,<sup>280</sup> and consequently non-contradictory, but based on its pragmatic power to envision. This has implications for his use of Christian symbols. For example instead of narrowly exclusive “Jesusolatry”, Fox advocates a wider concept of the “Cosmic Christ” archetype,<sup>281</sup> and a Trinitarian emphasis on the immanent Spirit.<sup>282</sup> The Cross is similarly reimaged as the “crucifixion of Mother Earth” as an appropriate symbol for ecocide.<sup>283</sup>

## Prophecy

Influenced by Brueggemann,<sup>284</sup> Fox’s concept of prophecy is located within his “Via Transformativa”. Rather than prediction, prophecy concerns the struggle for justice.<sup>285</sup> It is not a vocation for gifted individuals, but for all people, of all faiths.<sup>286</sup> Nor is it restricted to special religious activities, but involves our everyday work, whether artistic, office, domestic, or ritual work.<sup>287</sup> In particular, it is the oppressed

<sup>276</sup> See Fox & Sheldrake, *The Physics of Angels*, pp. 29 ff

<sup>277</sup> See Lawrence Osborn, “A Fox Hunter’s Guide to Creation Spirituality,” in Andrew Walker (Ed.), *Different Gospels. Christian Orthodoxy and Modern Theologies* (London: SPCK, 1993), pp. 155 ff

<sup>278</sup> *ibid*, pp. 91 ff

<sup>279</sup> M. D. Chenu, “The Body and Body Politic in the Creation Spirituality of Thomas Aquinas,” in Matthew Fox (Ed.), *Western Spirituality. Historical Roots, Ecumenical Routes* (Santa Fe, NM: Bear & Co., 1981), p. 207

<sup>280</sup> See Fox, *Whee! We, Wee*, p. 112

<sup>281</sup> Matthew Fox, “A Mystical Cosmology: Towards a Postmodern Spirituality,” in *Wrestling with the Prophets*, p. 15 f

<sup>282</sup> Matthew Fox, “Creation Spirituality and the Return of a Trinitarian Christianity,” pp. 54 f

<sup>283</sup> Matthew Fox, *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ. The Healing of Mother Earth and the Birth of a Global Renaissance* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), p. 83; quoted in Brearley, *op cit*, p. 43

<sup>284</sup> See Fox, *Confessions*, p. 116

<sup>285</sup> See Fox, *On Becoming a Musical, Mystical Bear*, p. 99

<sup>286</sup> See Fox, *Original Blessing*, pp. 262 ff

<sup>287</sup> See Matthew Fox, *The Reinvention of Work. A New Vision of Livelihood in Our Time* (New York: Harper San Francisco, 1994), p. 13



themselves,<sup>288</sup> especially women,<sup>289</sup> who speak the prophetic word. Following Abraham Heschel's study of prophecy, Fox therefore prioritises the role of listening in prophecy, because the prophet must feel the emotions of God's "pathos",<sup>290</sup> especially in the pain and anger of the poor.<sup>291</sup> It is unlikely, however, that Heschel would have completely shared Fox's perspective. Heschel's Jewish standpoint emphasised God's revelation through history rather than the Canaanite nature religions.<sup>292</sup> Both agree, however, that prophets should criticise the status quo. After Fox's reception into the Episcopalian Church, he wrote that this "Protestant Principle" of protest<sup>293</sup> identified by Tillich,<sup>294</sup> complemented Catholic mysticism.<sup>295</sup>

For Fox, political activism, was not opposed to mysticism. Rather, quoting William Hocking, Fox envisaged mystic and prophet as dialectical moments in the life of the same person. Temporary withdrawal was necessary in order to reenergise for the struggle.<sup>296</sup> Consequently, Fox quotes the mediaeval mystics, Hildegard of Bingen and Meister Eckhart, who combined spirituality with political action: Hildegard protesting against ecclesiastical abuses of power,<sup>297</sup> and Eckhart opposing the suppression of the peasants' revolt.<sup>298</sup> Such prophecy arises from "vision" birthed, according to Fox, in "extrovert meditation",<sup>299</sup> which awakens the Hindu "fifth chakra", associated by Fox with prophecy.<sup>300</sup>

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<sup>288</sup> See Fox, *Original Blessing*, p. 16

<sup>289</sup> *ibid*, p. 271

<sup>290</sup> Heschel, *The Prophets*, pp. 247 ff

<sup>291</sup> See Fox, *Original Blessing*, p. 260

<sup>292</sup> See Abraham Heschel, *The Earth is the Lord's The Sabbath. Its Meaning for Modern Man* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), p. 71 f, quoted in Brearley, *op cit*, pp. 48 f

<sup>293</sup> See Fox, *Confessions*, p. 228

<sup>294</sup> See Paul Tillich, *The Protestant Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 230

<sup>295</sup> See Fox, *Confessions*, p. 248

<sup>296</sup> See Fox, "A Mystical Cosmology," p. 6

<sup>297</sup> See Matthew Fox, "Introduction," in Matthew Fox (Ed.), *Hildegard of Bingen's Book of Divine Works with Letters and Songs* (Santa Fe, NM: Bear 7 Co, 1987), pp. xiv ff

<sup>298</sup> See Fox, "Meister Eckhart and Karl Marx," pp. 166, 192

<sup>299</sup> Fox, *Original Blessing*, p. 261

<sup>300</sup> Matthew Fox, "Creation Spirituality Encounters the 7 Chakras," *CSN Creation Spirituality Network* (Vol. 12, No. 2, Summer 1996), p. 12



Like Kelsey, Fox advocates art as a way in to prophecy. Drawing on Otto Ranke's work on the psychology of art, Fox advocates the use of creativity to envision alternatives to the existing order.<sup>301</sup> This element of "play" also delivers the prophet from humourless fanatical moralism. Fox's use of psychology however is instrumental. He recognises the dangers inherent in psychologising spiritual direction<sup>302</sup> and ignoring the external demands of justice.<sup>303</sup> Nevertheless, his debt to Jung for discovering the divine in the "unconscious",<sup>304</sup> situates Fox's *Manner* within spirituality's inward turn.

### Discernment

Fox opposes what he terms "reactionary religious movements",<sup>305</sup> whose otherworldliness combines with a conservative political agenda. Even Afro-American Pentecostalism suffers this dualistic mentality.<sup>306</sup> The Protestant emphasis on the "Word" has inhibited the development of mysticism,<sup>307</sup> and the resultant desire to convert the unbeliever is the "shadow side" of prophetic proclamation.<sup>308</sup> On the other hand Fox also criticises the left's avoidance of "values" language.<sup>309</sup> According to Fox, South American liberation theology derives from the European Enlightenment, while North American Creation Spirituality authentically embodies the indigenous spiritual impetus.<sup>310</sup> Nevertheless, he believes that recently the two traditions have converged, largely due to a recognition of the severity of the ecological threat.<sup>311</sup>

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<sup>301</sup> See Matthew Fox, "Otto Rank on the Artistic Journey as a Spiritual Journey, the Spiritual Journey as an Artistic Journey", in *Wrestling with the Prophets*, pp. 199 ff

<sup>302</sup> *ibid*, p. 202

<sup>303</sup> See Fox, *On Becoming a Musical, Mystical Bear*, p. 123

<sup>304</sup> Fox, *Whee! We, Wee*, p. 55

<sup>305</sup> Fox, *On Becoming a Musical, Mystical Bear*, p. 65

<sup>306</sup> *ibid*, pp. 132 f

<sup>307</sup> Fox, *Original Blessing*, p. 20

<sup>308</sup> Matthew Fox, "Counting Our Blessings (Interview with Matthew Fox)," in David Jay Brown & Rebecca McClen Novick (Eds.), *Voices From The Edge* (Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press, 1995), p. 166

<sup>309</sup> Fox, *Confessions*, p. 148

<sup>310</sup> See Matthew Fox, "Liberation Theology and Creation Theology," in *Wrestling with the Prophets*, pp. 157 ff

<sup>311</sup> Fox, *Confessions*, pp. 193 ff



Fox's "True Prophet"<sup>312</sup> will explore personal "rerooting" through the savouring of life and creativity, and periods of withdrawal; as well as in "uprooting" injustice, and active community involvement. A prophet will also be "reluctant" to assume the mantle, partly because of the cost in forsaking pleasure for activism, and partly because of the opposition the prophet provokes from the powerful.<sup>313</sup> Others have described Fox's own role prophetically;<sup>314</sup> and understandably he portrays his confrontation with the Vatican in prophetic terms,<sup>315</sup> identifying himself with Leonardo Boff as co-victims of Vatican repression.<sup>316</sup>

### Prospects?

Despite his prophetic tone, it is unlikely that Fox will successfully effect the social revitalisation he desires. He observes that most tribal cultures use ritual to socialise youth into communal values.<sup>317</sup> But today, traditional symbols have lost their power. Therefore Fox's *Manner* involves the renewal of worship as a way of revitalising the whole culture. Although he has incorporated sweat lodges and circle dances into his educational curriculum,<sup>318</sup> however, most attempts to create ritual remain the province of small groups.<sup>319</sup> Perhaps this lay behind his attraction to the Nine O'Clock Service in Sheffield. While they searched for a theology to suit their counter-cultural missiology, Fox found an influential institutional framework.<sup>320</sup> Rave music, with the DJ as "Techno-Shaman",<sup>321</sup> became a means of inducing ecstatic states of

<sup>312</sup> Fox, *On Becoming a Musical, Mystical Bear*, pp. 109 ff

<sup>313</sup> "Introduction", in *Wrestling with the Prophets*, p. xiv

<sup>314</sup> See Jorge Aquino, "The Prophet of Creation Spirituality. Fox Blending Technology with Tradition," *The Plain Dealer* (15 th Sept. 1995) (Internet); and Petra Griffiths, "'Dominicans Expel a Prophetic Voice'. Editorial," *Interchange. Journal of Creation Spirituality* (Spring 1993), p. 3

<sup>315</sup> See Fox, "Meister Eckhart and Karl Marx", pp. 191 ff

<sup>316</sup> See Fox, *Confessions*, pp. 170 ff

<sup>317</sup> See Fox, "Religion as if Creation Mattered," in *Wrestling with the Prophets*, p. 46

<sup>318</sup> See Fox, "Deep Ecumenism, Ecojustice, and Art as Meditation," p. 219

<sup>319</sup> See Karyn Wolfe, "Celebrating Original Blessing: The Berkeley Celebration Circle", *Creation Spirituality* (Vol. XI, No. 1, Spring 1995), pp. 46 ff;

Note: I have taken part in Creation Spirituality rituals at the *Liberating the Vision* Conference, La Sainte Union College, Southampton, 24 - 28 th May 1996, conducted by Chris and Isabel Clarke; and at *Wisdom For An Evolving Planet*.

<sup>320</sup> Doug Gay, *Interview*

<sup>321</sup> Richard Scheinen & Matthew Fox, "Reinventing Ritual. The Planetary Mass," *Creation Spirituality* (Vol. XI, No. 1, Spring 1995), p. 28



consciousness.<sup>322</sup> After the Sheffield debacle,<sup>323</sup> Fox has continued to hold Techno-Masses in San Francisco's Grace Cathedral, but he has now lost his greatest vehicle.

This illustrates the flaw in his approach which arises from his embeddedness in the hedonistic culture of late capitalism. It is unfair to criticise Fox for expressing a pleasure-seeking Californian ethos,<sup>324</sup> because his ministry began in radical 1960s industrial Chicago. Creation Spirituality and the New Age, however, are spiritual counterparts of consumerism, which anaesthetise and compensate the articulate dominant or ascending middle classes for their alienation. It is doubtful whether a truly radical critique of capitalism can be achieved by them. Individualistic seekerdom cannot provide the collective institutional base for organisation, nor can it generate the specific ethical demands needed for deviant discipleship.<sup>325</sup> Although some small deviant groups exist (e.g. Findhorn), for many their affiliation is temporary. Probably therefore Creation Spirituality will take its place as another leisure-time<sup>326</sup> sub-cultural grouping in postmodern pluralism.<sup>327</sup>

Already financial problems have caused the glossy journal *Creation Spirituality* to be replaced by a smaller, cheaper newsletter, *Original Blessing*. In London, Fox's base was at St. James' Church, Piccadilly. With the retirement of the Rector, Donald Reeves, the Creation Spirituality Centre has left the premises. This and the longstanding funding problems of the Centre illustrate the difficulties of sustaining the institutional forms of alternative spirituality.

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<sup>322</sup> See Ronan Hallowell, "Rave, Ritual and the Rebirth of Celebration," *Creation Spirituality* (Vol. XI, No. 2, Summer 1995), pp. 39 ff

<sup>323</sup> See Roland Howard, *The Rise and Fall of the Nine O'Clock Service* (London: Mowbray, 1996)

<sup>324</sup> See Angela West, *Matthew Fox: Blessing For Whom?* (London: the Jubilee Group, 1993), p. 12

<sup>325</sup> cf. Bruce, *op cit*, p. 119

<sup>326</sup> See Paul Heelas, "The New Age: A religion for the future?" *Demos Quarterly* (Issue 11, 1997), p. 26

<sup>327</sup> See J. Gordon Melton, "Whither the New Age?" *The Way* (Vol. 33, No. 3, July 1993), pp. 208 f



#### 4. MARY GREY: ECOFEMINISM

##### Personal Touch

Born in County Durham in 1941, Mary Grey went on to study at Oxford and later in Louvain. After lecturing at St. Mary's College, Twickenham, she became Professor in Feminism and Christianity at the Catholic University of Nijmegen in 1989. Then in 1993, she became Professor of Contemporary Theology in La Sainte Union College (LSU), affiliated to Southampton University. Her theology forms part of the liberal Catholic post-Vatican II revision of doctrine and sacraments in terms of universal human experience.<sup>328</sup> Eventually she realised this actually meant male experience,<sup>329</sup> and began to reinterpret Christian theology specifically with reference to women's experience.<sup>330</sup>

For Grey, feminism has the prophetic task and possibility of rescuing the Church from its irrelevance.<sup>331</sup> She is a Church theologian, trying to be faithful to the tradition, and it distresses her to see so many young people leave Catholicism.<sup>332</sup> The prophet however, is not the Old Testament caricature of the bearded, angry individual.<sup>333</sup> Instead prophecy is a communal vocation, particularly for women. Such prophecy is expressed through, for example, the Greenham Common Peace Camp, and non-violent demonstrations at the Ministry of Defence;<sup>334</sup> and she has spoken at "Webster's" (the

<sup>328</sup> See Mary Grey, *In Search of the Sacred. The Sacraments and Parish Renewal* (Wheathampstead, Herts.: Anthony Clarke Books, 1983) p.16

<sup>329</sup> See Mary Grey, "Beyond Exclusion. Towards a feminist eucharistic ecclesiology," in Mary Grey, Andree Heaton and Danny Sullivan (Eds.), *The Candles are Still Burning. Directions in Sacrament and Spirituality. Essays in honour of Christiane Brusselmans* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1995), p. 3

<sup>330</sup> cf. Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk. Towards a Feminist Theology* (London: SCM, 1983), p. 24

<sup>331</sup> See Mary Grey, *Redeeming the Dream. Feminism, Redemption and Christian Tradition* (London: SPCK, 1989), p. 133

<sup>332</sup> See Mary Grey, *Beyond the The Dark Night. A Way Forward for the Church?* (London: Cassell, 1997), pp. vii ff

<sup>333</sup> Mary Grey, *Interview 2*, 13.9.96

<sup>334</sup> Grey, *Interview 2*



London-based women's spirituality centre).<sup>335</sup> But her feminism aims at the "revitalisation" of the Church, not its destruction,<sup>336</sup> building a "Feminist eucharistic ecclesiology"<sup>337</sup> through "prophetic communities", like the "Woman-Church" movement.<sup>338</sup>

For Grey, this poses a dilemma. Carol Christ and Judith Plaskow point out the reformist and revolutionary strategies facing all Christian feminists.<sup>339</sup> One may remain in the Church, to reform its sexism but risk compromise; or one can retain one's radicalism and leave the Church, but perhaps become irrelevant. These options, according to Carter Heyward,<sup>340</sup> result in "two kinds of prophecy", as for example with Rosemary Ruether and Mary Daly. Grey, like Ruether, has chosen reformism. Like Ruether,<sup>341</sup> she feels the pain of remaining within a sexist institution. Nevertheless Grey believes there is still liberating power in the Jesus tradition<sup>342</sup> and that the potential still exists for an "ecological church" with a genuinely "prophetic servant leadership".<sup>343</sup>

### Theological Agenda

Grey's reformism also informs her academic agenda. She wants to rescue theology from its abstract isolation, and restore its prophetic function of calling the Church to the practice of justice.<sup>344</sup> This underlies her editorship of *Theology in Green* (now

<sup>335</sup> See Sarah Ingle, "The Websters Lecture 1996. Gather The Fragments: Feminist Theology Faces the Millennium," *Sophic Voices. Newsletter of the women in the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement* (November 1996), p. 6

<sup>336</sup> Amanda Porterfield, "Feminist Theology as a Revitalization Movement," *Sociological Analysis*, Vol. 48, No. 3, Fall 1987)

<sup>337</sup> Grey, "Beyond Exclusion", p. 3

<sup>338</sup> Grey, *Redeeming the Dream*, p. 173

<sup>339</sup> See Carol P. Christ and Judith Plaskow, "Preface to the 1992 Edition," in Carol P. Christ & Judith Plaskow (Eds.), *Womanspirit Rising. A Feminist Reader in Religion* (San Francisco: Harper, 1992[1979]), p. viii

<sup>340</sup> See Carter Heyward, "Ruether and Daly: Theologians Speaking and Sparking, Building and Burning", *Christianity and Crisis* (Vol. 39, No. 5, 2 nd April 1979), p. 68

<sup>341</sup> See Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Why I stay in the Church. Grace in the Midst of Failings," *Sojourners* (Vol. 23, No. 6, July 1996), pp. 14 ff

<sup>342</sup> See Grey, *Redeeming the Dream*, p. 2

<sup>343</sup> Grey, *Beyond the Dark Night*, pp. 62 ff, 120 ff

<sup>344</sup> See Mary Grey, *From Cultures of Silence to Cosmic-Justice-Making: A Way forward for Theology. An Inaugural Lecture, Oct. 13 th 1993* (Southampton: University of Southampton, 1993), p. 11



*Ecotheology*), the Summer Schools at LSU, and her own work re-imaging Christian symbols inclusively: for example the sacraments, the trinity, redemption, and revelation. However, the reformist dilemma also faces the academic.<sup>345</sup> During the 1996 LSU Contemporary Theology Summer School, debate ranged over whether it was possible to be “prophetic” in academia.<sup>346</sup> Grey accepts the risk of compromising the “moral high ground,” but feels that there are gains in terms of encouragement and jobs for younger women.<sup>347</sup> Indeed, this seemed to be true, as many young women had registered at LSU largely because of Grey’s presence. She however accepts that marginalisation is the prophet’s likely fate.<sup>348</sup> Ironically this has recently been her own experience. When Southampton University absorbed LSU, after it failed its government Ofsted inspection, she resigned and went to teach at Sarum College, Salisbury.

Grey considers herself a liberation theologian.<sup>349</sup> As in Rosemary Ruether’s work, the “Prophetic Principle” is extended to critique sexism within liberation theology itself,<sup>350</sup> since even prophetic language may exclude women.<sup>351</sup> For Athalya Brenner, this means exposing the “pornoprophetics of violence” within Scriptural prophecy as well.<sup>352</sup> Nevertheless, Ruether suggests that it is those churches which have conceived ministry in terms of charisma, as prophecy rather than priesthood, that have been most open to women’s ordination.<sup>353</sup>

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<sup>345</sup> See Judith Plaskow and Carol P. Christ, “Introduction,” in Judith Plaskow & Carol P. Christ (Eds.), *Weaving the Visions. New Patterns in Feminist Spirituality* (San Francisco: Harper, 1989), p. 8

<sup>346</sup> I attended the *Liberating the Vision. Summer School* (Southampton: LSU, 24 - 28 May 1996)

<sup>347</sup> Grey, *Interview 2*

<sup>348</sup> See Grey, *Redeeming the Dream*, p. 133

<sup>349</sup> See Grey, *From the Cultures of Silence to Cosmic-Justice-Making*, p. 5

<sup>350</sup> See Rosemary Radford Ruether, “Sexism and God-Language,” in Plaskow and Christ, *Weaving the Visions*, pp. 155 f

<sup>351</sup> See Rosemary Radford Ruether, “The Liberation of Women: Promise and Betrayal,” *Journal of Theology for South Africa* (No. 73, Dec. 1990), pp. 25, 30

<sup>352</sup> Athalya Brenner, “Introduction,” in *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), pp. 34 f

<sup>353</sup> See Rosemary Radford Ruether, “Appendix I: The Preacher and the Priest: Two Typologies of Ministry and the Ordination of women,” in Constance F. Parvey (Ed.), *Ordination of Women in Ecumenical Perspective* (Geneva: WCC, Faith and Order Paper 105, 1980), pp. 67 ff



Feminist “ecoprophetism”<sup>354</sup> breaks with Cultural-Political modernism by re-identifying women and nature.<sup>355</sup> According to Ecofeminism, both are oppressed in the same terms. For example, identical language is used to describe them as passive, inert, immanent, and material. Whereas the masculine is seen as active, vibrant, transcendent, and spiritual or intellectual. The resultant dualism parallels the anthropocentric domination of humans over nature with the androcentric domination of men over women. In addition, it generates a theological dualism of separation between God and world. Earlier feminism sought inclusion in the masculine world;<sup>356</sup> but radical feminism, of which Ecofeminism is an outgrowth,<sup>357</sup> prioritises difference between men and women, and valorises those characteristics which have been demeaned. Ecofeminist theology therefore valorises matter and the body, seeing feminine nature as fundamentally “interrelated”, and therefore connected with the nature of the universe. This ontological framework again draws on the new cosmology and process thought.<sup>358</sup>

Grey’s “relational theology”<sup>359</sup> is also influenced by Carol Gilligan’s psychological findings, which suggest that girls develop differently to boys, who grow up through a process of separation.<sup>360</sup> Patricia Yeoman maintains that this creates different “prophetic voices”,<sup>361</sup> in which men stress moral absolutes in political debate, women tend to value inclusivity and maintaining relationships. Others also attribute this to the “bodied epistemology” of women,<sup>362</sup> which stems from female rootedness in bodily processes such as menstruation.<sup>363</sup> From this experiential difference, Grey

<sup>354</sup> Larry R. Rasmussen, *Earth Community, Earth Ethics* (Geneva: WCC, 1996), p. 242

<sup>355</sup> See Grey, *Redeeming the Dream*, pp. 42

<sup>356</sup> See Elaine Storkey, *What's Right with Feminism* (London: SPCK, 1985), p. 57 ff

<sup>357</sup> Elaine Storkey, *Interview* (10.7.96)

<sup>358</sup> See Grey, *Redeeming the Dream*, pp. 33 f

<sup>359</sup> Mary Grey, *Prophecy and Mysticism. The Heart of the Postmodern Church* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1997), pp. 23 ff

<sup>360</sup> See Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice. Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge, MASS/London: Harvard University Press, 1982), pp. 62, 147

<sup>361</sup> Patricia A. Yeaman, “Prophetic Voices: Differences between men and women,” *Review of Religious Research* (Vol. 28, No. 4, June 1987), p. 375

<sup>362</sup> Spretnak, *States of Grace*, p. 149

<sup>363</sup> See Christ and Plaskow, “Introduction”, in *Womanspirit Rising*, pp. 11 ff



deduces an incarnational, non-hierarchical *Manner* of revelation,<sup>364</sup> based not on propositional truth but on God's presence in women's own experience.<sup>365</sup>

### Connectedness

This non-dualistic concept of God, inevitably means that Grey has to reimage the relationship of divine transcendence and immanence, since as Daly comments the former is frequently "hypostatized" as "Wholly Other".<sup>366</sup> Grey therefore defines transcendence, literally, as "crossing over",<sup>367</sup> that is the power of interconnectedness. This has implications for a non-dualist metaphor of revelation as "connectedness".<sup>368</sup> The Holy Spirit thereby becomes the One who reveals this interconnectedness.<sup>369</sup> In Charlene Spretnak's words, revelation is not supernatural but "ultranatural".<sup>370</sup>

Grey knows that "Feminist Mysticism"<sup>371</sup> may become nature mysticism,<sup>372</sup> a romanticised idyll for middle class women.<sup>373</sup> She therefore repeats Thomas Merton's call for politics and mysticism to be fused.<sup>374</sup> Prophecy then becomes the practical making of interconnections between people, social struggles, and the planet.<sup>375</sup> Connectedness thus shapes both the *Message* and *Manner* of prophecy. As Catherine Keller writes, this makes "contemporary prophecy horizontal", encountering the divine in relationships not "vertical moments of transcendence".<sup>376</sup>

<sup>364</sup> Grey, *Redeeming the Dream*, p. 36

<sup>365</sup> See Mary Grey, "Revelation", in Letty M. Russell and J. Shannon Clarkson (Eds.), *Dictionary of Feminist Theologies* (London: Mowbray, 1996), p. 243

<sup>366</sup> Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father. Towards a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* (London: the Women's Press, 1986[1973]), pp. 19 ff

<sup>367</sup> Mary Grey, "Does Christianity need the Goddess? Or, Can Christianity Embrace the Goddess and Still be Christianity?," *Theology in Green* (April 1993), p. 10

<sup>368</sup> Mary Grey, *Wisdom of Fools*, pp. 57 ff

<sup>369</sup> *ibid*, p. 129

<sup>370</sup> Spretnak, *States of Grace*, p. 205

<sup>371</sup> Mary E. Giles, *The Feminist Mystic and Other Essays on Women and Spirituality* (New York: Crossroad, 1982)

<sup>372</sup> See Grey, *Redeeming the Dream*, p. 48

<sup>373</sup> *ibid*, p. 39

<sup>374</sup> See Grey, *Prophecy and Mysticism*, pp. 5 ff

<sup>375</sup> Mary Grey, *Interview 1* (27.5.96)

<sup>376</sup> Catherine Keller, "Talk about the Weather. The Greening of Eschatology," in Carol J. Adams (Ed.), *Ecofeminism and the Sacred* (New York: Continuum, 1993), p. 34



This is similar to Matthew Fox's view, and Grey serves on the committee for the London Creation Spirituality Centre, and has taught a conference there.<sup>377</sup>

Nevertheless, she feels Creation Spirituality lacks liberation theology's emphasis on justice.<sup>378</sup> For her, Fox's generalisations avoid detailed "social analysis", and his stress on creation's goodness ignores the depth of sin and the need for redemption.<sup>379</sup> She also thinks his style of public performance is more akin to evangelical preaching than her own dialogical approach to discussion.<sup>380</sup>

For Grey, listening to the "other" is very important, since the unity of interconnectedness must not become a monism which destroys diversity. Minority voices such as gays and Native Americans are therefore very significant.<sup>381</sup> This pathway to self-affirmation is also very important for women, who have traditionally been socialised into self-denial.<sup>382</sup> Grey therefore draws on Michel Foucault's concept of the "subjugated knowledges",<sup>383</sup> and Mary Daly's process of "re-membering",<sup>384</sup> to regather the fragments of women's lives. Intellectually and spiritually therefore, Grey is a "re-visionary"<sup>385</sup> studying the "usable and prophetic" resources of past tradition.<sup>386</sup>

Grey also utilises psychotherapeutic insights, and women's literature,<sup>387</sup> especially poetry. In particular she cites Doris Lessing's character Martha Quest<sup>388</sup> as an example of visionary prophecy.<sup>389</sup> Carol Christ likewise quotes Martha Quest, but as

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<sup>377</sup> "In Search of An Ecological Theology," *Interchange. Journal of Creation Spirituality* (Spring 1996), p. 19

<sup>378</sup> See Grey, *Redeeming the Dream*, p. 63

<sup>379</sup> *ibid*, pp. 11, 178 n.14

<sup>380</sup> Mary Grey, *Letter* (26.11.96)

<sup>381</sup> *Interview 2*

<sup>382</sup> See Grey, *Redeeming the Dream*, p. 72

<sup>383</sup> *ibid*, pp. 9, 94

<sup>384</sup> *ibid*, p. 10

<sup>385</sup> Storkey, *Interview*

<sup>386</sup> Eleanor L. McLoughlin, "The Christian Past: Does it hold a future for women?" in Christ & Plaskow, *Womanspirit Rising*, p. 93

<sup>387</sup> *ibid*, p. 65

<sup>388</sup> See Doris Lessing, *The Four-Gated City* (St. Albans: Granada, 1972)

<sup>389</sup> See Grey, *Redeeming the Dream*, p. 67



an example of Jung's archetype of the "medial woman".<sup>390</sup> This illustrates the ambivalence feminists feel toward Jung, whose philosophical idealism detracts from the bodiliness of women's experience.<sup>391</sup> Nevertheless, Grey uses archetypes to develop empowering symbols,<sup>392</sup> such as the mythical silent prophetess Cassandra<sup>393</sup> and the goddess. Grey criticises goddess worship for dualistically pitting women against men, and for its inaccurate historical reconstruction of a matriarchal past. She recognises, however, its ability to empower, and hopes it will stimulate Christians to rediscover such myths within their own tradition.<sup>394</sup>

Grey also welcomes insights from extra-Biblical traditions, such as Babylonian mythology.<sup>395</sup> But her aim is the renewal of Christian theology. For example, she has explored the symbol of "Sophia" in relation to revelation,<sup>396</sup> although Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza developed it further, portraying Jesus as a prophet of Sophia.<sup>397</sup> In her search for historical legitimation, Fiorenza has also examined the role of women prophets in the early church.<sup>398</sup> Anne Primavesi, meanwhile, has demonstrated the similarity between Christian and ecological apocalyptic language.<sup>399</sup> Grey too picks up on this, reassessing eschatology as a dual symbol of ecological crisis and ultimate hope.<sup>400</sup> Grey's main reimagining, however, has been of the person of Christ. His incarnation, whilst historical, is seen as an instance of the continuing immanent

<sup>390</sup> See Carol P. Christ, "Spiritual Quest and Women's Experience," in *Womanspirit Rising*, p. 241

<sup>391</sup> See Grey, *Wisdom of Fools*, p. 108 f

<sup>392</sup> *ibid*, p. 86

<sup>393</sup> See Mary Grey, "Empowered by a Vulnerable God": *the Roots and Wings of Relational Theology* (Unpublished Paper), p. 18

<sup>394</sup> See Grey, *Redeeming the Dream*, p. 53

<sup>395</sup> See Mary Grey, "The Core of our Desire," *Theology* (Vol. XCIII, No. 755, September-October 1990), p. 369

<sup>396</sup> Grey, *Prophecy and Mysticism*, pp. 61 ff

<sup>397</sup> See Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, *Jesus: Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet* (London: SCM, 1995[1994]), p. 141

<sup>398</sup> See Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, "Word, Spirit and Power: Women in Early Christian Communities", in Rosemary Radford Ruether And Eleanor McLaughlin (Eds.), *Women of Spirit. Female Leadership in the Jewish and Christian Traditions* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), p. 39

<sup>399</sup> See Anne Primavesi, *From Apocalypse to Genesis. Ecology, Feminism and Christianity* (Tunbridge Wells: Burns & Oates, 1991); and Catherine Keller, "Talk about the Weather. the Greening of Eschatology," in Adams, *op cit*, pp. 30 ff

<sup>400</sup> See Grey, *Beyond the Dark Night*, pp. 107 ff



presence of God in the world.<sup>401</sup> His crucifixion is not atoning, but the result of a life lived in the power of interrelationality and an attempt to block that energy.<sup>402</sup> The resurrection then becomes an example of the victory of interconnectivity throughout history, and the ground for eschatological hope.<sup>403</sup>

## Context

Although Grey exhibits personal humility and authenticity, her reimagining of Christian dogma is flawed sociologically. She illustrates the post-Vatican II reformulation of faith by the educated, liberal middle classes, in terms of social ethics.<sup>404</sup> Kieran Flanagan, who admittedly has his own conservative agenda, nevertheless accurately discerns the sociological dilemma. Far from halting the haemorrhaging of Catholicism, Grey's project is actually a symptom of the decay and will further accelerate it. Liturgical and doctrinal revision in a pluralist direction will only exacerbate decline.<sup>405</sup> Rather than removing obstacles to belief, it will provide less to believe in. In effect Grey's selective re-theologising is a protestantised Catholicism.<sup>406</sup>

As Max Weber suggested, the religion of intellectuals is largely abstract and immanentist, dealing with matters of "meaning".<sup>407</sup> This is true of Grey. In contemporary terms, she belongs to the new knowledge elite not the old industrial bourgeoisie. The religious intellectual, however, is a declining part of this class fraction. In a society where institutionalised religion is shrinking, the intellectual used to dealing with symbolic systems is the first to feel the "religious vacuum".<sup>408</sup> For the

<sup>401</sup> See Grey, *Redeeming the Dream*, pp. 102 f, 150

<sup>402</sup> *ibid*, p. 125

<sup>403</sup> *ibid*, p. 107

<sup>404</sup> See Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain since 1945* (Oxford/Cambridge, MASS: Blackwell, 1994), p. 35

<sup>405</sup> See Kieran Flanagan, "Theological Pluralism: A Sociological Critique," in Ian Hammett (Ed.), *Religious Pluralism and Unbelief. Studies Critical and Comparative* (London/New York: Routledge, 1990), pp. 81 ff

<sup>406</sup> This verdict on Grey's views could be amended with the publication of her new book in 2000, *The Outrageous Pursuit of Hope: Prophetic Dreams for the 21st Century*.

<sup>407</sup> Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, pp. 124 f

<sup>408</sup> Feuer, *op cit*, p. 169



first time in Britain, Catholicism is in absolute decline. Grey, coming from a northern Catholic community, is now distanced by education from these roots. With the collapse of Catholicism's plausibility structure, her search for "lost wholeness" is also a search for lost community, of the extended family and the faith, as her family reminiscences reveal.<sup>409</sup> Her desire for a "common language" to overcome postmodern fragmentation,<sup>410</sup> is a nostalgic longing for lost consensus.

In a pluralistic society, however, consensus is unlikely to return. Although Ecofeminism motivates individuals, it is unlikely to change society. It struggles against organisational problems, gender imbalances, competition between groups, and weak governments.<sup>411</sup> Furthermore, Grey's desire for a unified, utopian vision paradoxically owes much to modernity's Enlightenment project. It is also vulnerable to the same weaknesses, so although Grey recognises that Foucault's relativism undermines moral absolutes, she can only assert that it is "unacceptable".<sup>412</sup> By undercutting the supernatural supports for Christian faith, there is now no sociological base for belief.<sup>413</sup>

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<sup>409</sup> See Grey, *Empowered by a Vulnerable God*, p. 1

<sup>410</sup> Grey, *Beyond the Dark Night*, pp. 19 ff

<sup>411</sup> See Nancy J. Finley, "Political Activism and Feminist Spirituality," *Sociological Analysis* (Vol. 52, No. 4, Winter 1994), p. 360

<sup>412</sup> Grey, *Redeeming the Dream*, p. 9 f

<sup>413</sup> See Johnson, *op cit*, p. 58



## CHAPTER 6

### COMBINATIONS AND CROSSOVERS

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

The previous four chapters demonstrate how prophetic models can illuminate prophetic ministry. In practice, however, there are empirical exceptions. There are people and groups which *combine* aspects of several models or which *cross-over* from one to another. We have already seen an example of this in Conservative-Protestantism's continual process of adjustment, which arises inevitably from its defensive apologetic.

This chapter examines two transitions: from charisma to politics, and from politics to creation. These correspond to larger cultural movements as the continuance of modernity *pushes* charismatics and Pentecostals concerned about social relevance, and the emergence of postmodernity *pulls* cultural and political critics worried about ecology. Because of the difficulty in combining the worldviews of Charismatic-Pentecostal and Cultural-Political prophecy, this difficult transition will occupy more space than the relatively straight forward transition from political to creation-based prophecy.



## 2. FROM CHARISMA TO POLITICS: THE DIFFICULT COMBINATION

In general Pentecostals<sup>1</sup> and charismatics<sup>2</sup> exclude political comment from prophecy. Larry Christensson's "charismatic approach to social action" typified charismatic individualistic opposition to governmental programmes.<sup>3</sup> Instead of compelling people to support welfare through taxes, Christian social action should be through charitable action by individuals and the Church.<sup>4</sup> Prophecy is therefore restricted to the personal exercise of spiritual gifts.<sup>5</sup> More recently, Pytches<sup>6</sup> and Bickle<sup>7</sup> have acknowledged the social aspect of prophecy, but only mention it briefly before proceeding to 'charismatic' issues. The difference between Charismatic-Pentecostal and Cultural-Political prophecy is not only the politicised *Message*, but the *Manner* of political concern. Charismatic political prophecy remains trapped: sociologically by middle class individualistic spirituality and theologically by other-worldly dualism. Where Prophets do incorporate political activity, it is conceived in personalistic terms, as individual meetings with Presidents and Prime Ministers. This inevitably accepts the prevailing power structure rather than challenging it, since access to power is what charismatic prophets crave.

Another area where Charismatic-Pentecostal prophecy touches politics, is spiritual warfare.<sup>8</sup> Charismatic cosmology includes demons, principalities and powers. These may possess individuals or control institutions and geographical areas.<sup>9</sup> But through prayer Christians can deliver individuals and institutions or areas from enemy

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<sup>1</sup> See William K. Kay, "Perspectives on Prophecy," *Paraclete* (Vol. 26, No. 1, Winter 1992), p. 2

<sup>2</sup> See Denis Bennett, *op cit*, p. 115

<sup>3</sup> See Kenneth Leech, "Theological Renewal and the Catholic Left," in *The Social God*, pp. 133 f

<sup>4</sup> See Larry Christenson, *A Charismatic Approach to Social Action* (London: Lakeland, 1975), pp. 84 ff

<sup>5</sup> *ibid*, p. 53

<sup>6</sup> See David Pytches, *Prophecy in the Local Church*, pp. 10 f

<sup>7</sup> See Mike Bickle, *Growing in the Prophetic*, pp. 223 f

<sup>8</sup> e.g. see p. 88

<sup>9</sup> See C. Peter Wagner, *Territorial Spirits* (Chichester: Sovereign World, 1991)



influence. Prophetic discernment helps intercessors by identifying the controlling spirits over a person or place, for example in urban evangelism.<sup>10</sup> This theology of the powers arises as a response to failure. On the left, we have seen, political defeat prompted the recovery of apocalyptic.<sup>11</sup> On the right, evangelistic failure and moral collapse prompts the recovery of demonology.<sup>12</sup>

These perspectives raise metaphysical questions about the ontological status of such entities and structures, but as regards politics they are virtual politics or “fabulation” - that is a search for imaginary solutions where material solutions are absent.<sup>13</sup> Without accompanying practical action, spiritual solutions are not authentically ‘political,’ no matter how valuable as intercession or therapy.

## Two styles

The difference in *Manner* between Charismatic-Pentecostal and Cultural-Political prophecy is illustrated by two prophetic interventions during the 1997 pre-election period in Britain. In February, Paul Slennett and Clifford Denton (who works with Intercessors for Britain) issued a book based on a prophecy given to Slennett. This stated that God would cause an earthquake in the City of London as a judgment on materialism and financial corruption, and on the government’s pro-European policies.<sup>14</sup> Later, in September, Slennett intimated that October was the likely time for a stock market crash,<sup>15</sup> and indeed global markets did then meltdown. While he accepted the earthquake could be figurative, however, he cited newspaper support<sup>16</sup> for expecting a physical earthquake.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> See Floyd McClung, *Spirits in the City* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1990)

<sup>11</sup> See pp. 106

<sup>12</sup> See p. 57 f

<sup>13</sup> See Jameson, *op cit*, p. 369

<sup>14</sup> See Clifford Denton & Paul Slennett, *Earthquake in the City. How to Survive the Coming Economic Collapse* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1997)

<sup>15</sup> Paul Slennett, *Interview 1* (24.9.97)

<sup>16</sup> See Jonathan Leake, “London could face quake of LA scale, say geologists,” *The Sunday Times* (15 September 1996), p. 26

<sup>17</sup> Paul Slennett, *Interview 2* (17.11.97)



The second prophetic event was the publication in April of the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland report on unemployment.<sup>18</sup> In his foreward, David Sheppard described it as a “prophetic word”,<sup>19</sup> and in a subsequent interview he referred to the influence of Old Testament prophets on his stand for justice.<sup>20</sup> He emphasised too the importance of having Christians on the working party in order to “comment from a Christian perspective”.<sup>21</sup> Although the report criticised all parties<sup>22</sup> and its recommendations for increased governmental spending opposed Labour Party policy, in the pre-election context it’s social interventionism was perceived as particularly hostile to the Conservatives.<sup>23</sup>

Slennett also expects God to “judge the West, judge Capitalism”.<sup>24</sup> But, influenced by American Larry Burkett,<sup>25</sup> Slennett represents middle class fears of recession and suspicion of finance capital, whose wealth affronts the thrifty Protestant ethic. In contrast to the Report’s reception, denominational leaders ignored Slennett’s mailing, and the press ridiculed his book.<sup>26</sup> It was however favourably mentioned in *Prophecy Today*, the magazine of Clifford Hill’s Prophetic Word Ministries. This special pre-election issue, whose distribution was financed by an anonymous Christian businessman,<sup>27</sup> included an article by Slennett’s co-author, Clifford Denton, in which he defends the Protestant basis of the monarchy.<sup>28</sup> Another article condemned the European community as a Catholic plot to take over Europe.<sup>29</sup> Politically inexperienced, Slennett has been trapped in a right-wing anti-European alliance.

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<sup>18</sup> *Unemployment and the Future of Work. An Enquiry for the Churches* (London: CCBI, 1997)

<sup>19</sup> *ibid*, p vi

<sup>20</sup> See Matthew Bishop, “Unbeaten Stand,” *Third Way* (Vol. 20, No. 7, September 1997)

<sup>21</sup> David Sheppard, *Enough Work for Everyone* (Unpublished speech, at the report’s Dublin launch, June 1997), p. 2

<sup>22</sup> See Alex Bellos & Michael White, “Churches slate all parties,” *The Guardian* (9 April 1997), p. 12

<sup>23</sup> See Paul Goodman, “Socialism at Last,” *The Daily Telegraph* (9 April 1997), p. 22

<sup>24</sup> Slennett, *Interview 2*

<sup>25</sup> See Larry Burkett, *The Coming Economic Collapse* (Chicago: Moody, 1991)

<sup>26</sup> See Francis Wheen, “The end may be nigh for the EC,” *The Guardian G2* (19 February 1997), p. 5

<sup>27</sup> Clifford Hill, circular *Letter* included in issue.

<sup>28</sup> See Clifford Denton, “The Coronation Oath: A Key to understanding God’s Word for Europe,” *Prophecy Today* (Vol. 13, No. 3, May/June 1997), pp. 21 ff

<sup>29</sup> See Adrian Hilton, “The Principality and Power of Europe,” in *ibid*, pp. 14 ff



Both prophetic interventions, however, share a “clerical nostalgia”<sup>30</sup> for erastian assumptions of the Church’s right to a hearing from government. They represent two versions: one conservative, the other liberal - the former without, the latter with access to power. Nevertheless, their *Manner* exemplifies two prophetic models: Slennett’s given by “dictation”,<sup>31</sup> Sheppard’s founded on socio-economic analysis - the former breaking, the latter obeying the norms of secular political discourse.

### **Pentecostalism**

Pentecostalism has not prioritised political aspects of Christianity. Its global base among the powerless gives little reason for optimism regarding political activism. Moreover the expectation of an imminent parousia, the identification of social justice with liberal theology, and evangelicalism’s conservative influence provide theological reasons for this neglect.<sup>32</sup> This does not imply that Pentecostalism has no political significance however. Their congregations provide “islands of humanity” among the oppressed.<sup>33</sup> After a “period of social latency”, their apolitical “freespace” gives them confidence to enter civil society.<sup>34</sup> Like base communities they engage in social action at the local level.<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, where social action occurs it is frequently perceived as a contribution to counter-insurgency strategy.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Hamish McRae, “Clerical Nostalgia won’t solve unemployment,” *The Independent* (9 April 1997), p. 19

<sup>31</sup> Slennett, *Interview 2*

<sup>32</sup> See Cecil M. Robeck, “Pentecostals and Social Ethics,” *Pneuma* (Vol. 9, No. 2, Fall 1992), p. 106

<sup>33</sup> See Hollenweger, *op cit*, pp. 457 ff

<sup>34</sup> David Martin, *Tongues of Fire. The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), p. 267 f

<sup>35</sup> See Charles E. Self, “Conscientization, Conversion, and Convergence. Reflections on Base Communities and Emerging Pentecostalism in Latin America,” *Pneuma* (Vol. 14, No. 1, Spring 1992), pp. 59 ff

<sup>36</sup> See Enrique Dominguez & Deborah Huntington, “The Salvation Brokers: Conservative Evangelicals in Central America,” *NACLA Report on the Americas* (Vol. XVII, No. 1, January/February 1984), pp. 2 ff



Some intellectuals exposed to theological influences are rethinking social concern, but they are largely from disadvantaged groups, such as black<sup>37</sup> and hispanic communities,<sup>38</sup> rather than northern white Pentecostalism.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, politics is usually seen in terms of social ethics or evangelism, rather than prophecy. Nevertheless, Murray Dempster has advocated imitating the Old Testament tradition of “prophetic criticism”,<sup>40</sup> and Eldin Villafane has proposed taking spiritual gifts outside the “culto” into society<sup>41</sup> to raise “prophetic voices against sinful social structures”. Their call for prophecy, however, is for something that is still “missing”.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, this development is the product of educated middle class second generation Pentecostals ashamed of older simplistic beliefs.<sup>43</sup> For example, the Mission Iglesia Pentecostal in Chile had young leaders who saw prophecy not in individual charismatic terms, but as political protest and economic development.<sup>44</sup> These activists however grew disappointed at the lack of politicisation among poorer Church members.<sup>45</sup> Eventually, the Church shrank and reverted to conservative strategies.

## Community

Roman Catholic charismatics have usually been perceived by radicals as socially conservative, encouraging “inward-looking” spiritualities and privatised solutions.<sup>46</sup> Rather than promoting criticism, renewal is felt to encourage a “lessening of social

<sup>37</sup> See Hollenweger, *op cit*, p. 469

<sup>38</sup> See Douglas Petersen, *Not by Might nor by Power. A Pentecostal theology of Social Concern in Latin America* (Oxford: Regnum, 1996)

<sup>39</sup> See Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, pp. 295 f

<sup>40</sup> Murray Dempster, “Pentecostal Social Concern and the Biblical Mandate of Social Justice,” *Pneuma* (Vol. 9, No. 2, Fall 1987), pp. 138 ff

<sup>41</sup> Eldin Villafane, *The Liberating Spirit. Toward an Hispanic American Pentecostal Social Ethic* (Grand Rapids, MICH: Eerdmans, 1993), p. 164

<sup>42</sup> *ibid*, p. 202

<sup>43</sup> See Hollenweger, *op cit*, p. 99

<sup>44</sup> See Frans Kamsteeg, *Prophetic Pentecostalism in Chile. A Case Study on Religion and Development Policy* (Amsterdam: Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. Thesis, 1995), p. 11

<sup>45</sup> *ibid*, p. 188

<sup>46</sup> Raul Vidales, “Charisms and Political Action,” in Duquoc & Floristan, *op cit*, pp. 71 ff



commitment”.<sup>47</sup> Ecclesiastically, charismatics have been submissive, usually seeking the hierarchy’s approval before beginning initiatives.<sup>48</sup> Despite its student origins, renewal strengthened loyalty to conservative spiritual practices, like the rosary and Marian devotion, and distracted people from political expressions of faith.<sup>49</sup>

Cardinal Suenens, a renewal leader, recognised the “tension between the ‘spiritual’ Christian and the ‘socially committed’ Christian”,<sup>50</sup> but advocated a “necessary complementarity” between the two,<sup>51</sup> with the Holy Spirit underlying both.<sup>52</sup> In particular, he indicated the “prophetic role of vital Christian communities.” This applied Vatican II teaching on the Church as a “sacrament of the world’s unity” to small communities.<sup>53</sup> Indeed Bruce Yocum’s writing about prophecy cannot be understood without reference to his setting in the Community of the Word of God in Ann Arbor, Michigan. For example, his description of weighing prophecy presupposes a communal lifestyle where people know each other intimately.<sup>54</sup>

Most communities have not survived.<sup>55</sup> One which did was the Mother of God Community in Gaithersburg, Maryland, to which Hocken belonged. This was led by two women, one of whom wrote prophetic interpretations of God’s purposes in renewal.<sup>56</sup> It remained, however, a middle class, suburban, Catholic sect. Eventually it was rent by scandal in 1996 over financial irregularities and directive personal prophecies.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit* (New York: Seabury Press/ London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1983[1979]), p. 168

<sup>48</sup> Peter Hocken, *Interview*

<sup>49</sup> See Henri Nouwen, “Pentecostalism on Campus,” in Henri Nouwen, *Intimacy. Essays in Pastoral Psychology* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1969), pp. 74 f

<sup>50</sup> Leon Joseph Suenens & Helder Camara, *Charismatic Renewal and Social Action: A Dialogue* (London: DLT, 1980), p. 5

<sup>51</sup> *ibid*, p. 8

<sup>52</sup> *ibid*, p. 39

<sup>53</sup> Leon Joseph Suenens, *A New Pentecost?* (London: DLT, 1975), pp. 151 ff

<sup>54</sup> See Yocum, *op cit*, p. 66

<sup>55</sup> See Hocken, “The Charismatic Movement in the United States,” pp. 208 f

<sup>56</sup> See Edith Difato, *God’s Gracious Purpose* (Unpublished Manuscript, July 1992)

<sup>57</sup> I visited the Mother of God Community in 1994



This community emphasis, like that of Sojourners, reflected a wider interest in intentional community as an alternative lifestyle during the 1970s. In Britain, communities at Ashburnham and Post Green consciously saw themselves as a prophetic alternative to capitalism and materialism.<sup>58</sup> Guided by “words of prophecy” and radicalised through the simple lifestyle movement,<sup>59</sup> Post Green realised that social witness required a prophetic community to ground “prophetic words” in a visible lifestyle.<sup>60</sup> In a study guide on nuclear weapons they included a charismatic-style prophecy condemning the idolatry of relying on missiles for security.<sup>61</sup> Eventually however, they shifted to the Christian mainstream, as seen in the transformation of their magazine from the charismatic *Towards Renewal* to the politicised *Grassroots*, which merged with the ecumenical magazine *Christian*. It seems that as prophecy becomes politicised, it becomes less charismatic.

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<sup>58</sup> See Timothy Pain, *Prophecy. Ashburnham Insights* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1986), pp. 38, 42

<sup>59</sup> See Sider, *op cit*

<sup>60</sup> “Editorial. The Challenge of Being Prophetic,” *Towards Renewal of Church and Society* (Summer 1980), p. 3

<sup>61</sup> See David H. Jantzen, “My People, I Am Your Security. A Nuclear Prophecy,” in Martha Keys Barker, Alan Kreider, Val Nobbs, Donald Scott, & Mike Sweatman, *Time To choose. A Grassroots Study Guide on the Nuclear Arms Race from a Christian Perspective* (Poole, Dorset: Celebration Services (Post Green) Ltd., 1983)



### 3. FROM CHARISMA TO POLITICS TO CONSERVATISM:

#### CLIFFORD HILL

##### Prophet

Clifford Hill grew up as a Methodist and began to preach in his teens, but liberal theology at college made him question his early faith,<sup>62</sup> and he studied sociology to make Christianity more relevant. He was a minister in Tottenham for ten years, and lectured in sociology at London University, during which time he wrote about race,<sup>63</sup> and became a Home Office advisor on race, police and prison issues.

In the 1970s, he experienced charismatic renewal and moved to Newham. Here he founded the Newham Community Renewal Programme, an ecumenical project combining social action and evangelism. In 1979, he became Director for Evangelism at the Evangelical Alliance, but left to begin Prophetic Word Ministries (PWM) in 1982 and the magazine *Prophecy Today* in 1983.<sup>64</sup> Meanwhile, he also worked at the Anglican Churches, St. Marks, Kennington and All Saints, Brixton. He has now established the Centre for Contemporary Ministry based in Bedfordshire to conduct ministerial in-service training, and courses in Church growth, evangelism, and Biblical studies.<sup>65</sup>

Hill's charismatic experience propelled him into prophetic ministry. According to him, since Pentecost the whole Church is a "prophetic people".<sup>66</sup> He distinguishes, however, between the "gift" or "manifestation" of prophecy which anyone may exercise; the "natural gift" of prophecy which is equivalent to preaching; and the

<sup>62</sup> See Clifford Hill, *Tell My People I Love Them* (London: Fount, 1983), p. 39

<sup>63</sup> See Clifford Hill, *West Indian Migrants and the London Churches* (London: Institute for Race Relations/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963); & *Black Churches: West Indian and African Sects in London* (London: British Council of Churches, 1971)

<sup>64</sup> Clifford Hill, *Interview 2* (6.9.96)

<sup>65</sup> *The Centre for Contemporary Christian Ministry Spring 1998 Newsletter*

<sup>66</sup> Clifford Hill, *The Day Comes. A Prophetic View of Contemporary Britain* (London: Fount, 1982), p. 15



“ministry” which is the regular exercise of prophetic insight.<sup>67</sup> The “gift” of prophecy is limited to exhortation and restricted to the local Church. The “ministry” is to the whole Church.<sup>68</sup> He does not call it an “office,” but a “ministry gift” - a “function” not a “status”.<sup>69</sup> The prophet interprets the signs of the times,<sup>70</sup> equipping the Church to fulfil its prophetic commission to evangelise.<sup>71</sup> Prophecy’s *Message*, however, is not limited to religious matters. The prophet applies God’s Word to the “national life”.<sup>72</sup> He is the “barometer of the health of the nation”.<sup>73</sup> Hill asserts that God calls prophets in times of “crisis” to guide his people.<sup>74</sup> Today, however, God’s people are an international community rather than a nation,<sup>75</sup> so where Old Testament prophets guided the nation through crises, New Testament prophets guide the Church’s mission strategy.<sup>76</sup> In Hill’s view, personal prophecy’s popularity is due to the rejection of public prophecy by Church and nation, making prophets retreat into the safety of small group meetings.<sup>77</sup>

## Prophecy

Hill sees prophecy as “divine truth revealed through the activity of God...the product of the self-revelation of God through man”.<sup>78</sup> He opposes the link, however, between prophecy and ecstasy. He distinguishes between the bands of *nabi* prophets who, he claims, compromised with Baalism, and the solitary contemplative prophets who later became the writing prophets.<sup>79</sup> True prophecy moreover does not involve trances,<sup>80</sup> or

<sup>67</sup> Clifford Hill, *The Biblical Basis of Prophecy* (London: Prophetic Team Ministries, 1989), pp. 21 ff

<sup>68</sup> Hill, *Prophecy Past and Present*, p. 229

<sup>69</sup> *ibid*, p. 203

<sup>70</sup> See Clifford Hill, *Towards the Dawn. What’s Going to Happen to Britain?* (London: Fount, 1980), pp. 11 f

<sup>71</sup> *ibid*, p. 181

<sup>72</sup> *ibid*, p. 14

<sup>73</sup> Clifford Hill, *A Prophetic People* (London: Fount, 1986), p. 37

<sup>74</sup> Hill, *Tell My People I Love Them*, p. 28

<sup>75</sup> *ibid*, p. 34

<sup>76</sup> See Hill, *The Biblical Basis of Prophecy*, pp. 27 f

<sup>77</sup> See Clifford Hill & Monica Hill, *...And They Shall Prophesy! The New Prophetic Movement in the Church Today* (London: Marshall Pickering, 1990), p. 73

<sup>78</sup> *ibid*, p. 4

<sup>79</sup> See Hill, *Towards the Dawn*, p. 12

<sup>80</sup> See Hill, *Prophecy Past and Present*, p. 27



occultic experience.<sup>81</sup> Hill therefore castigates the New Age, calling Matthew Fox a “false prophet”,<sup>82</sup> and lamenting the repeal of the Witchcraft Act.<sup>83</sup> He also criticises psychoanalytic interpretations of prophecy in terms of “abnormal psychology”.<sup>84</sup> In contrast, he stresses the prophet’s control of his mind,<sup>85</sup> with God using humanity’s “ordinary attributes” to help prophets understand the significance of contemporary events.<sup>86</sup> Since God is sovereign over history and nature, events are revelatory,<sup>87</sup> understanding the “meaning of history” is therefore important for prophecy.<sup>88</sup>

Regarding eschatology, although Hill admits his beliefs are “always evolving”, he holds to “classical premillennialism”.<sup>89</sup> Consequently he criticises both postmillennialism and dispensationalist teaching on the pre-tribulation rapture, because while the former encouraged triumphalism the latter’s escapism discouraged social activism.<sup>90</sup> Hill’s premillennialism leads him to view the founding of Israel as a fulfilment of Biblical prophecy, and to oppose “replacement theology” which portrays the Church as the “new Israel”. He accepts that Israel is a “non-converted state”,<sup>91</sup> but believes God protects it, and claims to have received a prophetic warning of impending Syrian attack on Israel!<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> *ibid*, p. 39

<sup>82</sup> Clifford Hill, “Editorial,” *Prophecy Today* (Vol. 11, No. 6, November/December 1995), p. 5

<sup>83</sup> See Clifford Hill, *Shaking the Nations. A Future and a Hope* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1995), p. 149

<sup>84</sup> Hill, *Prophecy Past and Present*, p. 28

<sup>85</sup> *ibid*, p. 36

<sup>86</sup> *ibid*, p. 39

<sup>87</sup> *ibid*, pp. 145 ff

<sup>88</sup> Hill, *Shaking the Nations*, pp. 61 ff

<sup>89</sup> Clifford Hill, *Interview 3* (18.3.97); for the difference between classical and predispensational Premillennialism see Robert G. Clouse (Ed.), *The Meaning of the Millennium* (Downers Grove, ILL: IVP, 1977), pp. 17 ff

<sup>90</sup> See Hill, *A Prophetic People*, p. 132

<sup>91</sup> Hill, *Interview 3*

<sup>92</sup> See Hill, *...And They Shall Prophesy!*, pp. 29 ff



Hill rejects claims that much Old Testament prophecy is apocalyptic. Instead he treats these passages as predictions of literal events,<sup>93</sup> like nuclear war or ecological disaster.<sup>94</sup> He claims that this cataclysm will occur by 2050 unless humanity repents.<sup>95</sup> The signs of judgment are visible, he claims, in family breakdown, violence, sexual immorality, abortion and economic problems. In addition, Hill discerns God's direct intervention. For example, the York Minister fire revealed Divine displeasure at David Jenkins' ordination as Bishop of Durham, and the 1987 hurricane was a sign of judgment against the Stock Market which crashed immediately afterwards.<sup>96</sup> Although for Hill these signs indicate "the end of the age," this is not the end of the world, but of "an age" or period of time in God's purposes.<sup>97</sup> Specifically it is the end of the "era of the Gentiles",<sup>98</sup> when the "shaking of the nations" may indicate the "downfall of western civilisation".<sup>99</sup> For Hill, however, prophecy only communicates the "possible future pattern of events".<sup>100</sup> The outcome depends on whether people repent.

## Sociology

Hill writes that prophecy is "not the product of intellectual attainment or rational debate" or "the product of logical deduction." It is revelation. Its relationship with "empirical truth" and "contemporary relevance", however, distinguishes prophecy from contemplative meditation<sup>101</sup>. Because of this social relevance, the prophet is on the "frontier of the social and the religious". Indeed, according to Hill, the "socio-political situation" provides the "essential reconditions" for prophecy to arise. Consequently he sees Biblical prophets as "students of contemporary society",<sup>102</sup>

<sup>93</sup> See Hill, *The Day Comes*, p. 37

<sup>94</sup> *ibid*, pp. 96 ff

<sup>95</sup> *ibid*, p. 326

<sup>96</sup> See Hill, *...And They Shall Prophesy!*, pp. 60 f

<sup>97</sup> Hill, *Tell My People I Love Them*, p. 58

<sup>98</sup> Hill, *The Day Comes*, p. 287

<sup>99</sup> Hill, *Shaking the Nations*, p. 96

<sup>100</sup> Hill, *Tell My People I Love Them*, p. 52

<sup>101</sup> Hill, *Prophecy Past and Present*, p. 13

<sup>102</sup> Hill, *A Prophetic People*, p. 37



with a “good sociological understanding”.<sup>103</sup>

Hill uses sociological tools to understand “highly complex industrial society”,<sup>104</sup> and regards Talcott Parson’s functionalist “social value theory” as “the most academically respectable of modern sociological theories” and regards its emphasis on “values” as compatible with Christianity.<sup>105</sup> Although now less explicit, functionalism still underlies his social analysis<sup>106</sup> and, he thinks, gives him a “tremendous advantage” in “thinking logically”.<sup>107</sup> Functionalism has led Hill to accentuate factors promoting “stability”,<sup>108</sup> and critique destabilising dysfunctional processes. The latter, he identified as demographic changes, cultural changes toward youth and pop culture and the New Left.<sup>109</sup> He writes that religion’s decline as an integrating force<sup>110</sup> is causing “chaos” and “normative anarchy”,<sup>111</sup> and that the accelerating “rate of change” will surpass society’s ability to adapt.<sup>112</sup>

Exceptionally for Charismatic-Political prophets, Hill easily embraces politics, but only because of this socio-political approach which predated his charismatic experience. His functionalism however produces binary prophecy with a split-level *Manner*. Although Hill denies a “schizophrenic” two-method approach,<sup>113</sup> his prophetic *combination* is bifurcated between charismatic revelation and sociological analysis. He asserts that revelation is received by the “spirit-filled intellect”<sup>114</sup> and is simply “mulled over” sociologically.<sup>115</sup> Nevertheless, he distinguishes two kinds of

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<sup>103</sup> *ibid*, p. 41

<sup>104</sup> See Hill, *Towards the Dawn*, p. 17

<sup>105</sup> *ibid*, p. 41

<sup>106</sup> Hill, *Shaking the Nations*, pp. 42 ff

<sup>107</sup> Hill, *Interview 2*

<sup>108</sup> Hill, *Towards the Dawn*, p. 25

<sup>109</sup> *ibid*, pp. 49 ff

<sup>110</sup> *ibid*, p. 55

<sup>111</sup> *ibid*, p. 72

<sup>112</sup> Hill, *Shaking the Nations*, p. 50

<sup>113</sup> Clifford Hill, *Interview 3*

<sup>114</sup> Hill, *A Prophetic People*, p. 128

<sup>115</sup> Hill, *Towards the Dawn*, p. 17



writing: “ordinary writing” and that done “under the direction of the Spirit”.<sup>116</sup> For Hill the prophet lives “in two worlds, the sacred and the secular”.<sup>117</sup>

The charismatic layer is added onto Hill’s intellectual framework. As a young religious intellectual losing his faith,<sup>118</sup> Hill felt that only an overwhelming experience unexplainable by “psychological needs or social processes” could overcome his rationalism.<sup>119</sup> Although charismatic experience overcame Hill’s liberal Protestantism, however, his suspicion of irrationalism later re-emerged in his controversy with prophetic rivals.<sup>120</sup> Moreover instead of spiritual integration there is a dualistic division between two worlds. This distinction may be necessary for prophecy, but Hill’s dependence on secular sociology prevents the development of a consistent prophetic model. Besides leaving him with an increasingly outmoded theoretical framework, it begs questions. Why secular sociology? Why one stressing stability, when liberation theology applying similar sociological mediation accentuates conflict?

### Conservatism

In contrast to other Cultural-Political examples, Hill’s functionalism therefore produces a conservative political *Message*. During his academic career, he enjoyed baiting Marxists,<sup>121</sup> saw strikes as destabilising,<sup>122</sup> and while analysing racism saw more threat to social order from the Anti Nazi League than the National Front.<sup>123</sup> Because he valued harmony, Hill also saw the higher black birth rate as a threat.<sup>124</sup> Likewise he opposes inter-faith worship, not only for religious reasons, but because it threatens the established Church’s role as guarantor of national stability.<sup>125</sup>

<sup>116</sup> Hill, *Tell My People I Love Them*, p. 62

<sup>117</sup> Hill, *The Day Comes*, p. 32

<sup>118</sup> See Feuer, *op cit*

<sup>119</sup> Hill, *Tell My People I Love Them*, p. 7

<sup>120</sup> See pp. 222 ff

<sup>121</sup> See Hill, *A Prophetic People*, p. 14

<sup>122</sup> See Hill, *Towards the Dawn*, p. 88

<sup>123</sup> *ibid*, pp. 96 ff

<sup>124</sup> See Hill, *The Day Comes*, p. 151

<sup>125</sup> See Clifford Hill, “Faith or Faiths?” *Prophecy Today* (Vol. 14, No. 2, March/April 1998), pp. 4 f



Hill did criticise Thatcherism's promotion of greed and neglect of "spiritual values".<sup>126</sup> He opposed both capitalism and Communism as materialistic creeds,<sup>127</sup> and predicted God's judgment on capitalism for its ecological and economic sins.<sup>128</sup> Hill's ideology, however, is "familist".<sup>129</sup> He is concerned to defend the family and sexual morality against breakdown and permissiveness,<sup>130</sup> and has recently served on a Parliamentary Committee on violence and pornography.<sup>131</sup>

This moral protest opposes late capitalist hedonism,<sup>132</sup> but also represents the ethos of a declining middle class fraction. Their alienation from social change<sup>133</sup> marks their hostility to global capitalism as petty bourgeois antipathy to big business and big government. The born-again individual is consequently regarded as the agent of social change.<sup>134</sup> Hill also emphasises what he discerns as a "new social phenomenon" of the 1990s, the "relative deprivation of the ruling classes",<sup>135</sup> compounded by national decline and loss of respect for the monarchy.<sup>136</sup> Recently he has opposed European integration in order to protect Britain's Protestant heritage and national autonomy.<sup>137</sup> This also parallels his premillennialist suspicion that world government is a precursor to the Beast of Revelation.<sup>138</sup>

Hill's solution for Britain's ills is educational, since functionalism gives education the responsibility for inculcating values.<sup>139</sup> To achieve this Christianity must be

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<sup>126</sup> Clifford Hill, "Who Rules Britain?" *Prophecy Today* (Vol. 7, No. 1, January/February 1991), p. 4

<sup>127</sup> See Hill, *The Day Comes*, pp. 227 f

<sup>128</sup> See Hill, *Shaking the Nations*, pp. 78 ff

<sup>129</sup> McGuire, *op cit*, p. 58

<sup>130</sup> See Hill, *Shaking the Nations*, pp. 106 ff

<sup>131</sup> Hill, *Interview I*

<sup>132</sup> cf. Dallas Cliff, "Religion, Morality and the Middle Class," in R. King & N. Nugent (Eds.), *Respectable Rebels* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1979), pp. 143 f

<sup>133</sup> See Schoenfeld, "Militant and submissive religions: class, religion and ideology," p. 132

<sup>134</sup> See Hill, *Towards the Dawn*, p. 84

<sup>135</sup> Hill, *Shaking the Nations*, p. 34

<sup>136</sup> *ibid*, pp. 38 f

<sup>137</sup> See p. 187

<sup>138</sup> *ibid*, p. 102

<sup>139</sup> *ibid*, p. 159



reestablished as the “foundational belief of the nation”,<sup>140</sup> with the Church as “priest and prophet to the nation”,<sup>141</sup> and the prophetic movement leading a “national recovery”.<sup>142</sup> Here, despite his Free Church origins, Hill supports an atavistic nationalist Erastian vision. Quoting Weber, he regards the prophet as the source of “social innovation”.<sup>143</sup> Expanding the stratification between prophet and followers within PWM,<sup>144</sup> Hill inflates the prophet into national saviour. Social pluralisation, however, makes Hill’s attempted revitalisation unlikely to succeed, thereby confirming his predictions of judgment.

There are two periods in Hill’s ministry: firstly, his social ministry - pre- and post-renewal; secondly, his prophetic ministry: pre- and post-1990. During the latter, his initial hopes for “revival”<sup>145</sup> have turned pessimistic, and his politics more conservative. Earlier he wrote, almost postmillennially, of God establishing His Kingdom through the Church.<sup>146</sup> This reflected 1980s triumphalism, but a growing pre-millennial pessimism has overtaken him in the 90s. Ironically, this period has witnessed PWM’s organisational and financial success. In 1989, they nearly closed because of financial problems, but in 1990 this changed,<sup>147</sup> so that today they own their own premises. The change coincides with Hill’s controversy against the Kansas City Prophets, which may have provided Hill with a definite conservative support base. His subsequent isolation from the charismatic movement however suggests that although his position is objectively stronger, it is so only on the fringes of the evangelical archipelago.

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<sup>140</sup> *ibid*, p. 195

<sup>141</sup> *ibid*, p. 193

<sup>142</sup> *ibid*, p. 190

<sup>143</sup> *ibid*, p. 153

<sup>144</sup> See Johnstone, *Religion and Society in Interaction*, p. 215

<sup>145</sup> Hill, *Towards the Dawn*, p. 122

<sup>146</sup> See Hill, *The Day Comes*, pp. 92 f

<sup>147</sup> See Hill, “Who Rules Britain?” p. 5



#### 4. FROM CHARISMA TO CREATION TO POLITICS:

##### REVELATION FELLOWSHIP

##### Revelation

A more recent attempt to combine charisma and politics is that of the Revelation Fellowship in Chichester. This began in 1983 as a congregation aimed at young people. Led by Roger Ellis, it is part of Gerald Coates' Pioneer network of churches. Coates was one of the original leaders of British Restorationism. Again, Coates<sup>148</sup> and his lieutenant Martin Scott<sup>149</sup> view the prophet as a visionary goal-setter. Another dimension however is the relationship between translocal Prophet and local Church. Similar to the *Didache*'s portrayal of itinerant Prophets,<sup>150</sup> this is illustrated by Dale Gentry's relationship with Pioneer.<sup>151</sup> Gentry first visited Pioneer in 1990, and then in 1991 prophesied to Revelation Fellowship. These prophecies are regarded as being fulfilled in recent developments, especially the use of creativity among youth,<sup>152</sup> which has stimulated the development of *symbolic prophecy* in Revelation. Revelation has also developed politicised prophecy. Revelation Fellowship is on the cusp of postmodernity. Its prophetic *combination* incorporates aspects of both Creational-Pagan and Cultural-Political models, while remaining both evangelical and charismatic.

Symbolic prophecy arises from Revelation's relation to popular culture. It began among the heavy metal subculture, but by the late 80s they had settled down, and in the 90s, a new youth outreach began within the club scene. Using dance music and DJs, and exploiting the growth of Celtic spirituality and the phenomenon of youth

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<sup>148</sup> See Gerald Coates, "The Shape of the Prophetic Church to Come," in Gerald Coates (Ed.), *Breaking the Mould* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1993), p. 11

<sup>149</sup> See Martin Scott, *Prophecy in the Church* (Milton Keynes: Word (UK) Ltd./Pioneer, 1992)

<sup>150</sup> See "The Didache," in Maxwell Staniforth (Trans.), *Early Christian Writings* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), pp. 232 ff

<sup>151</sup> See Dale Gentry, *The Prophetic Voice in the Local Church* (Audio Tape Series) (Fort Worth, TX: Dale Gentry Ministries, n.d.)

<sup>152</sup> See Dale Gentry, *Prophetic Words from Dale Gentry to Revelation as a Church. 17 th - 19 th May 1991* (Revelation Fellowship: Unpublished Manuscript)



“tribes”, new styles of worship and spirituality were generated. Prophecy’s *Manner* thus changed from being verbal, into a “personal dynamic” expressed through lifestyle.<sup>153</sup> In postmodernity they feel, truth is communicable through symbol as much as word.<sup>154</sup> Prophecy therefore can be exercised in bodied spirituality through dance, painting, or pottery. Ellis carried a “techno-stick” which he used prophetically to touch people while praying for them.<sup>155</sup> But in the club atmosphere of their “Warehouse” services, it is supremely the DJ who prophesies “to the generations through music”.<sup>156</sup>

As in Southampton Community Church, Ellis thinks the Toronto Blessing prepared the way for creativity.<sup>157</sup> As the approach spread throughout Pioneer, there was also a generational shift in leadership possibly presaging the end of the charismatic era.<sup>158</sup> Nevertheless, as in Southampton, ritual elements do not indicate the introduction of liturgy. Although services are planned, Ellis senses that Anglican alternative worship will destroy spontaneity<sup>159</sup> and he does not use sacramental language because it is foreign to youth culture.<sup>160</sup> The implicit sacramentalism, however, echoes Umberto Eco’s “return of the middle ages”, in which God is perceived “in a tactile way”.<sup>161</sup> It recognises that God is “immanent”<sup>162</sup> and illustrates Pratt’s dichotomy between “objective worship” and “subjective worship”.<sup>163</sup> Perhaps the prophetic transition is from antimodern charismatic “subjective prophecy” via emotion to postmodern symbolic “objective prophecy” via objects.

<sup>153</sup> Roger Ellis, *Interview* (18.7.96)

<sup>154</sup> Chris Eaton, “Some thoughts on the prophetic symbolism and prophetic actions in the current move of the Holy Spirit as seen in Revelation meetings,” in Chris Eaton, Roger Ellis & Martin Scott, *Symbolism* (Chichester: Revelation Fellowship, 1995)

<sup>155</sup> Ellis, *Interview*

<sup>156</sup> Kenny Mitchell, “The Role of the D.J.” in Revelation Fellowship, *Warehouse Exposed* Conference Notes (25 - 27 th October 1997), p. 16

<sup>157</sup> Ellis, *Interview*

<sup>158</sup> See Johnny Sartin, “The charismatic movement is over,” *Compass* (Vol. 2, No. 3), p. 13

<sup>159</sup> Ellis, *Interview*

<sup>160</sup> Roger Ellis, “Appendix to the thoughts on the symbolism and prophetic actions paper by Chris Eaton,” in Eaton, Ellis & Scott, *op cit*, p. 9

<sup>161</sup> Umberto Eco, *Travels in Hyper-Reality* (London: Picador, 1987), p. 54

<sup>162</sup> Martin Scott, “The Toronto Blessing,” in Eaton, Ellis & Scott, *op cit*, p. 11

<sup>163</sup> See Pratt, *op cit*, pp. 290 ff



Revelation's approach is similar to alternative worship. The latter, however, is a development within established Churches as a response to disillusionment among young adults, whereas Revelation's creative worship arises from vibrant charismatic experience,<sup>164</sup> with more ecstatic and "Dionysian" worship than alternative worship's restrained "Apollonianism".<sup>165</sup> Alternative worship also joins other movements in rediscovering Celtic spirituality. These include charismatic Anglicans Michael Mitton<sup>166</sup> and Ray Simpson<sup>167</sup> who explore Celtic spirituality, and the Iona Community which relates Celtic tradition to justice and ecology. These express themselves in quiet contemplative and liturgical worship, as opposed to Revelation's clubland energy.<sup>168</sup> As Alvin Toffler suggested, when change accelerates<sup>169</sup> people need both quiet "enclaves of the past" to temporarily withdraw into and energetic "enclaves of the future" to anticipate their advancing future.<sup>170</sup> Revelation combines these "High-Tech" and "High-Touch" aspects of contemporary religion.<sup>171</sup>

Through bodied spirituality, Celtic revivalism and ecological concern<sup>172</sup> Revelation connects with Creational-Pagan prophecy. Furthermore Creation Spirituality and shamanism also influence alternative worship, Celtic spirituality and ecology. Ellis's evangelical doctrine and evangelistic motivation, however, ensure that Revelation's perspective is different, and he has written warnings against both the occult<sup>173</sup> and the New Age.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> I attended the *Re-Imaging Worship* Conference (Hackney, 8-10 May 1998)

<sup>165</sup> Roberts, *op cit*, p. 228

<sup>166</sup> See Michael Mitton, *Restoring the Woven Cord. Strands of Celtic Christianity for the Church Today* (London: DLT, 1995)

<sup>167</sup> See Ray Simpson, *Exploring Celtic Spirituality. Historic Roots for Our Future* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1995)

<sup>168</sup> Steve Dale, *Interview* (14.5.97)

<sup>169</sup> Toffler, *op cit*, pp. 40 f

<sup>170</sup> *ibid*, pp. 353 ff

<sup>171</sup> John Naisbitt & Patricia Aburdene, *Megatrends 2000* (London: Pan, 1991), p. 258

<sup>172</sup> See Chris Seaton, *Whose Earth?* (Cambridge: Cross Books, 1992)

<sup>173</sup> See Roger Ellis, *The Occult and You* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1989)

<sup>174</sup> See Roger Ellis & Andrea Clarke, *The New Age and You* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1992)



## Fusion

Within Revelation, prophecy has acquired a political *Message* largely through Greg Valerio who leads CRED, Revelation's social action and community development arm. Like Ellis, he rejects the "dichotomy between social action and evangelism."<sup>175</sup> Initially employed as a schools Development Worker, Valerio's work now includes marketing third world products and lobbying with Christian Aid for fair trade and aid policies. For him, "the Spirit of justice is the Spirit of prophecy". He wants a "Charismatic-Liberation fusion", which is "liberation by the power of the Holy Spirit".<sup>176</sup> Although he values charismatic prophecy, he criticises "prophecy on platforms" as a middle class "privatised prophecy culture" with "no social transforming dimension". He suspects therefore that traditional denominations may more easily accommodate justice issues than charismatic Churches.<sup>177</sup>

Revelation's social context has helped generate this radicalisation of prophecy. Unlike Southampton Community Church's orientation toward adult middle class culture, Revelation's location, on the social margins among "Generation X",<sup>178</sup> may produce a scepticism regarding authority, although this may not endure into adulthood. Ideological influences include firstly, according to Scott and Ellis, Anabaptist radicalism<sup>179</sup> and Pioneer's position now within moderate Restorationism. Indeed, describing itself as 'new church,' Pioneer may have withdrawn from Restorationism altogether. Certainly Coates's involvement with mainstream evangelicalism has facilitated a more favourable attitude to social concern.<sup>180</sup> These events have led Andrew Walker to suggest Coates is not so much a "restoration theologian" as an "event theologian".<sup>181</sup> This accords with the importance placed on prophecy's

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<sup>175</sup> Ellis, *Interview*

<sup>176</sup> Greg Valerio, *Interview 1* (8.6.97)

<sup>177</sup> Greg Valerio, *Interview 2* (13.6.97)

<sup>178</sup> See Douglas Coupland, *Generation X. Tales for an accelerated culture* (London: Abacus, 1992)

<sup>179</sup> Scott & Ellis, *Interviews*

<sup>180</sup> See Walker, *Restoring the Kingdom*, pp. 357 ff

<sup>181</sup> Andrew Walker, *Personal Conversation*



manifestation and encountering God in meetings, as Charismatic-Pentecostal prophecy supplements its recovery of the premodern “sacred person” (the prophet) with postmodern reverence for the “sacred place”.<sup>182</sup>

Questions remain concerning any lasting revitalisation of church or culture, because Revelation, enmeshed in pop culture, is unlikely to escape capitalism’s commodification of God through the reification of religious signs.<sup>183</sup> Despite Ellis and Seaton’s recent book,<sup>184</sup> Celtic fashion was already passé in Revelation by 1997, and seems now to be replaced by a taste for fairly-marketed Third World ethnic products. Although youthful signs of rebellion, these fads also represent the tastes of south coast affluent youth. Ellis is wary of being “shaped by the culture”.<sup>185</sup> He knows that symbolism may degenerate into the “designer label”, but still believes prophetic symbols can communicate spiritually.<sup>186</sup> Which it will be depends whether youth culture’s “bricolage”<sup>187</sup> withstands the exigencies of market manipulation.

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<sup>182</sup> Wessels, *op cit.* pp. 8 ff

<sup>183</sup> See Karl Marx, “On the Jewish Question,” in *Early Writings* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975), p. 239

<sup>184</sup> Roger Ellis & Chris Seaton, *New Celts. Following Jesus into Millennium 3* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1998)

<sup>185</sup> Roger Ellis, *Talk* at Revelation Morning Service (8.6.97)

<sup>186</sup> Ellis, *Interview*

<sup>187</sup> Dick Hebdige, *Subculture. The Meaning of Style* (London: Methuen, 1979), pp. 102 ff



## 5. FROM POLITICS TO CREATION: OLD FRIENDS

### Transition

The movement from concern for economic and political liberation to ecological and women's liberation has generated the Creational-Pagan prophetic model. Those already using materialist analysis incorporate these concerns most easily, since environmental degradation adversely affects the poor, especially women. Rosemary Ruether's work has broadened therefore from feminist liberation theology to include Ecofeminism. Nevertheless, she criticises elements of the new paradigm. She fears that its apocalypticism could become paranoia in the hands of some environmentalist "prophets"<sup>188</sup> and that historical reconstruction of matrilineal neanderthal society is a romantic inaccuracy.<sup>189</sup> Ruether also criticises Matthew Fox for his superficial treatment of evil, and his dualistic separation of people into supporters or opponents.<sup>190</sup>

Catholicism benefits most from this transition, due to its incarnationism, sacramentalism and mystical tradition. In addition, Catholicism's positive attitude to spiritual experience, from whatever tradition, treats all religions as expressions of the immanent Spirit, and points toward their fulfilment in Christ. Thus theologians examine charismatic and New Age spiritualities as signs of the spiritual times.

Donal Dorr's work illustrates this. He wrote in 1978, albeit critically, about charismatic renewal, interpreting it psychologically.<sup>191</sup> In the 1980s he wrote about social concern<sup>192</sup> and, imitating liberation theology, identified prophecy with

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<sup>188</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Gaia and God. An Ecofeminist Theology of Earth Healing* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1992), p. 84

<sup>189</sup> *ibid*, pp. 151 f

<sup>190</sup> *ibid*, p. 242

<sup>191</sup> See Donal Dorr, *Remove the Heart of Stone. Charismatic Renewal and the Experience of Grace* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1978)

<sup>192</sup> See Donal Dorr, *Option for the Poor. A Hundred Years of Vatican Social Teaching* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan/Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1983)



opposition to structural injustice.<sup>193</sup> Then in the 1990s, he began to write about ecology.<sup>194</sup> He argued that although prophecy concerns justice, it also requires spiritual understanding.<sup>195</sup> His “channels of prophetic inspiration” include the unconscious, ancestors, and the life of the earth itself.<sup>196</sup> Consequently the “particular kind of prophetic ministry” which he feels the west needs, is that of Matthew Fox and “other theologians in the ecological and feminist traditions”.<sup>197</sup>

### Protestant Liberalism

There is also a Protestant trajectory to the new paradigm, which a comparison of Rex Ambler and David Haslam reveals. In 1980 they co-edited *Agenda for Prophets* which summed up liberal-left prophecy. Ten years later, Ambler produced *Global Theology*, with references to “interconnectedness” and “unity with life on earth”<sup>198</sup> replacing his earlier emphasis on class.

During the 1960s, Ambler discarded his earlier Calvinist faith for a liberal theology influenced by Tillich, Robinson, and Cox, in particular the latter’s concept of prophecy as a “religionless” call for stewardship of the world.<sup>199</sup> From these Ambler learned that the “sacred is to be found in the secular” and “God is hidden in the world”. Eventually he was attracted to liberation theology which similarly located God politically in the liberation struggle.<sup>200</sup> In the early seventies, he abandoned

<sup>193</sup> See Donal Dorr, *Spirituality and Justice* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan/Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1984), p. 89

<sup>194</sup> See Donal Dorr, *The Social justice Agenda. Justice, Ecology, Power and the Church* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1991)

<sup>195</sup> See Donal Dorr, *Divine Energy. God Beyond Us, Within Us, Among Us* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1996), p. 20

<sup>196</sup> *ibid*, pp. 40 ff

<sup>197</sup> *ibid*, p. 28

<sup>198</sup> Rex Ambler, *Global Theology. The meaning of faith in the present world crisis* (London: SCM/Philadelphia, PA: Trinity Press International, 1990), pp. 56, 58

<sup>199</sup> Harvey Cox, “The Prophetic Purpose of Theology,” in Dean Peerman (Ed.), *Frontline Theology* (London: SCM, 1967), pp. 149 f

<sup>200</sup> Rex Ambler, *Interview* (16.7.97)



organised Christianity, accepting Marx's critique of religion as projection<sup>201</sup> and the secularist hypothesis that Christianity had no role as a political ideology for most British people. Christianity's future, according to Ambler, was as a "prophetic community, accepting its minority role" but relating to the wider struggle for social transformation.<sup>202</sup> Its value lay in using "memory" from the past to create "symbols of a future and as yet unrealised possibility".<sup>203</sup> "Rehearsing the tradition of prophecy" therefore did not require any "special dimension of faith". Instead Ambler reductively asserted that the socio-political "horizontal dimension is all we need".<sup>204</sup>

Ambler then suffered a breakdown causing him to "rethink the Christian message". Like Morton Kelsey, he questioned the "capacity of human reason to embrace the human situation", and concluded that an "overly intellectual outlook can lead to a pessimistic perspective". He also criticised Marxism because it had "lost the visionary, utopian impulse",<sup>205</sup> and condemned the military metaphors governing the polarity of Left and Right.<sup>206</sup> Politically, he began to see "the ecological as more foundational". Consequently he joined the Green Party, edited *Theology in Green* and became involved in Creation Spirituality.<sup>207</sup> The *Message* of Ambler's *crossover* prophecy still emphasised the "suffering of others",<sup>208</sup> but now included critiquing the "idolatry" behind the ecological and economic crises.<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> See Rex Ambler, "The Word Becomes Flesh: An Introduction to Political Theology," in Mary Condren (Ed.), *New Heaven New Earth. Pre-Conference Papers: Race, Sex and Class* (SCM Publications, Bristol, n.d.), p. 5

<sup>202</sup> Rex Ambler, "On looking back into the future," in Ambler & Haslam, *op cit*, p. 115

<sup>203</sup> *ibid*, p. 116

<sup>204</sup> *ibid*, p. 120

<sup>205</sup> Ambler, *Interview*

<sup>206</sup> See Rex Ambler, "Response I," in Fraser & O'Brien, *A Theology for Britain in the 80s*, p. 107

<sup>207</sup> Ambler, *Interview*

<sup>208</sup> Ambler, *Global Theology*, p. 23

<sup>209</sup> *ibid*, p. 64



## Quaker Light

Regarding *Manner*, Ambler turned to mysticism for something “more solid”, a “way of deepening”. Although influenced by Ghandhi and founding the Ghandhi Foundation, his spiritual home became Quakerism.<sup>210</sup> Based on the Quaker experience of the “inner light”,<sup>211</sup> and their non-violent witness, Ambler now describes prophecy as “speaking the truth to power”.<sup>212</sup> His Quakerism highlights the ecclesiastical shaping of prophecy. For example, charismatics John Wimber and Richard Foster have Quaker backgrounds, although Wimber’s Charismatic-Pentecostal prophetic model was apolitical, while Foster’s retained Quakerism’s emphasis on “social holiness”.<sup>213</sup> Although the “inner light” stimulates prophecy, however, Quakerism is now respectable and no longer a radical sect. Nevertheless Quakerism can still prompt a resurgence of “latent charisma”, as postmodernity draws on past resources to meet the psychic needs of culturally denuded liberalism.

Ambler distances himself, however, from conservative Quakerism. He distinguishes between “Christocentric” and “universalist” Quakerdom, aligning himself with the latter.<sup>214</sup> For him, theology is not subject to a “given authority like the Bible”. Rather, theology aims to “clarify what we already believe on the basis of experience”.<sup>215</sup> He therefore distinguishes dogmatic “intellectual stipulation” from “intellectual illumination” which finds truth in experience “beyond what words can utter”.<sup>216</sup> God is therefore a “metaphor for the kind of reality that cannot be talked about directly or literally”. Indeed, since it is “only a word”, God-talk is not needed to experience the

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<sup>210</sup> Ambler, *Interview*

<sup>211</sup> Harvey Gillman, *A Light that is shining. An Introduction to the Quakers* (London: Quaker home Service, 1988), p. 10

<sup>212</sup> Rex Ambler, *Global Theology: notes for a lecture* (Unpublished Manuscript, October 1988), p. 6

<sup>213</sup> Richard Foster, *Prayer. Finding the heart’s true home* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1992), pp. 259 ff

<sup>214</sup> Rex Ambler, *The End of Words. Issues in Contemporary Quaker Theology* (London: Quaker Home Service, 1994), p. 17

<sup>215</sup> *ibid*, p. 7

<sup>216</sup> *ibid*, p. 9



reality it symbolises.<sup>217</sup> God's presence has "immediacy" and does not need to be "mediated" because it is already within us.<sup>218</sup>

Ambler's position is similar to Jean Hardy's, who changed from atheist feminist sociologist to Creation Spirituality devotee and Quaker.<sup>219</sup> She likewise sees spiritual reality in this-worldly immanent terms.<sup>220</sup> In her and Ambler, 1960's secular theology meets Quakerism's "hidden presence of God".<sup>221</sup> The Quaker Meeting's practice of waiting for the Spirit is reminiscent of Ambler's earlier openness to the "voice of the Spirit" in present experience.<sup>222</sup> God is interpreted in Tillichian terms as "ultimate reality".<sup>223</sup> Despite his debt to modernity, Ambler regrets its utilitarian desacralisation of nature, perceiving that the ecological crisis has set limits to modernity's search for human autonomy.<sup>224</sup> Instead Ambler welcomes a pluralistic postmodern theology, which incorporates liberation, ecological, feminist and interfaith theologies, and provides a "prophetic challenge" to modernity.<sup>225</sup>

For Ambler this theology is plural and nonauthoritarian. He reasserts his belief that Christianity's waning in the northern hemisphere means that liberation theology cannot "rely on a widespread religious sensibility". Theology therefore has a "more limited role", and cannot speak for people of other faiths or none.<sup>226</sup> Hence the "prophetic task" entails a way of "speaking and witnessing which will make good sense in a culture which no longer publicly confesses faith in God".<sup>227</sup> Ambler

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<sup>217</sup> *ibid*, p. 25

<sup>218</sup> *ibid*, p. 28

<sup>219</sup> Jean Hardy, *Interview* (9.7.96)

<sup>220</sup> See Jean Hardy, *There is Another World But it is this One* (London: Quaker Universalist Group, 1988)

<sup>221</sup> Ambler, *The End of Words*, p. 35

<sup>222</sup> Ambler, "The Word Becomes Flesh," p. 3

<sup>223</sup> Ambler, *Global Theology*, p. 38

<sup>224</sup> See Rex Ambler, "The Self and Postmodernity," in Kieran Flanagan & Peter C. Jupp (Eds.), *Postmodernity, Sociology and Religion* (London: Macmillan, 1996), p. 146

<sup>225</sup> Rex Ambler, *Approaches to Theology. Theology and Modernity. Four Lectures* (Unpublished Manuscript, October 1992), p. 25

<sup>226</sup> Rex Ambler, *Global Theology: notes for a lecture*, p. 9

<sup>227</sup> *ibid*, p. 10



recognises that if prophecy appeals to consensus, then in a pluralist society civil religion in its prophetic mode must also be pluralist.<sup>228</sup> Ambler is heir to the interfaith approach of John Hick,<sup>229</sup> whom Ambler succeeded teaching philosophical theology at Birmingham University. Ultimately however, postmodern theology is non-realist. Ambler realises that for religion to serve this social function, it is “less important that we name God than that we speak, live, in a way that is faithful to God”.<sup>230</sup>

### Activism

A comparison with Ambler’s erstwhile collaborator, David Haslam, highlights Ambler’s prophetic *crossover*. Haslam also regarded prophecy as “political theology”.<sup>231</sup> His career combined political activism and pastoral ministry, however, while Ambler remained in academia. Not class, but their relative position within their class (fraction) shaped their prophetism. As a Methodist Minister in Harlesdon,<sup>232</sup> Haslam became involved in anti-racist activity locally, joining Christians Against Racism and Fascism and Christian Organisations for Social, Political and Economic Change. He recently left his post as Secretary of the Churches’ Commission for Racial Justice (CCRJ).

While Ambler found solace in mysticism, Haslam remained an activist. This illustrates the influence of personality types on prophecy distinguishing an introvert spirituality requiring quietness and an extrovert spirituality re-energised through people.<sup>233</sup> Haslam refers to getting his “energy” from meeting those fighting for personal justice against immigration laws.<sup>234</sup> He also fits Bianchi’s picture of the revolutionary finding

<sup>228</sup> See Andrew Shanks, *Civil Society. Civil Religion* (Oxford/Cambridge, MASS: Blackwell, 1995), p. 90

<sup>229</sup> See Hick, *op cit*

<sup>230</sup> Ambler, *Global Theology: notes for a lecture*, *ibid*

<sup>231</sup> David Haslam, “Towards a Political Theology for Britain - An Introduction,” in Ambler & Haslam, *op cit*, pp. 9 ff

<sup>232</sup> See Tony Holden, *People, Churches and Multi-Racial Projects* (London: The Methodist Church, Division of Social Responsibility, 1984), pp. 69 ff

<sup>233</sup> See Kelsey, *The Other Side of Silence*, pp. 21 ff

<sup>234</sup> David Haslam, *Personal Conversation*



ultimacy and transcendence in the secular experience of the liberation struggle itself.<sup>235</sup> Haslam is also less critical of liberation theology than Ambler, approaching it from an activist rather than an academic perspective. Haslam took his 1986 Sabbatical in Nicaragua,<sup>236</sup> and believes that liberation theologians are “the modern prophets”. Haslam thinks that “prophecy is weak in Europe” because “it threatens our way of life”, but discerns prophetic signs among ethnic minorities, the asylum movement for refugees, and in opposition to global capitalism. He described his work with CCRJ as “trying to be prophetic in the race dimension”,<sup>237</sup> and his recent book explores prophetic motivations for the struggle against racism.<sup>238</sup>

Haslam is suspicious of charismatic prophecy because it does not address the “underlying issues”. He resists using the “language” of “revelation” when working politically “with a secular world because you tend to lose them”. Although Ambler’s Quakerism gives him a sort of revelatory experience, he also recognises that cooperating with non-Christians requires neutral language. This raises the question of “audience” in prophecy.<sup>239</sup> If the prophet is to speak to secular power, should he or she use their terminology? Ironically, Clifford Hill suggests the same when he indicates that New Testament prophets never prophesied to pagan rulers.<sup>240</sup> As with Wallis,<sup>241</sup> it reiterates the Weberian dilemma of vocation. Can one be simultaneously a prophet committed to truth, and a politician called to a task? Is Christian intervention condemned either to be a relic because it uses jargon, or to lose its cutting edge as prophecy because it no longer uses God-language?

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<sup>235</sup> See Bianchi, *op cit*

<sup>236</sup> See David Haslam, *Faith In Struggle. The Protestant Churches in Nicaragua and their Response to the Revolution* (London: Epworth Press, 1987), p. vii

<sup>237</sup> David Haslam, *Interview* (7.2.96)

<sup>238</sup> See David Haslam, *Race for the Millennium* (London: Church House, 1996), pp. 153 ff

<sup>239</sup> Ian Rathbone, *Interview* (14.5.96)

<sup>240</sup> See Hill, *Prophecy Past and Present*, pp. 144 f

<sup>241</sup> See p. 93



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### CONFLICT

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

##### **“Conflict is life”<sup>1</sup>**

Disagreements and accusations of false prophecy characterise the prophetic. Whether the ensuing conflict is beneficial or destructive, however, depends on attitudes to conflict in general. Biblical scholar, Robert Carroll, claims “squabbling” between Israelite prophets caused scepticism about prophecy’s authority, reliability, and authenticity.<sup>2</sup> James Crenshaw likewise asserted that Israelite prophecy was “degraded” through conflict.<sup>3</sup> It could be the same today, that conflict will discredit prophetic claims. Carroll and Crenshaw, however, perceived conflict negatively as a non-normative cause of decline, rather than a normal part of discernment. Perhaps their decline hypothesis suited their liberal theological assumptions. Seeing prophecy as something which “failed” removes any Divine threat to human autonomy. Liberal Protestantism therefore mirrors Conservative-Protestantism’s antipathy to prophecy. Both operate in a closed universe - philosophical or post-canonical.

Conflict’s presence in Scripture on the contrary suggests that conflict will also characterise contemporary prophecy. Where Carroll and Crenshaw see conflict as a form of “dissociation”, a conflict model of society suggests conflict is another form of “sociation” with sometimes positive results.<sup>4</sup> Although the immediate impression appears to be destructive, its longterm results may be beneficial in resolving

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<sup>1</sup> H. A. Williams, *Tensions* (London: Mitchell Beazley, 1979[1976]), p. 11

<sup>2</sup> Robert P. Carroll, *When Prophecy Fails. Reactions and Responses to Failure in the Old Testament Prophetic Traditions* (London: SCM, 1979), p. 189

<sup>3</sup> Crenshaw, *op cit*, p. 108

<sup>4</sup> Georg Simmel, “Conflict as Sociation,” in Lewis A. Coser & Bernard Rosenberg (Eds.), *Sociological Theory: A Book of Readings* (London: Macmillan, 1969), pp. 212 ff



disagreements and tensions. Without conflict there may be no change or development. Whether conflict is vicious or virtuous will then depend on consequences. According to Simmel, conflict's absence may imply not well-being but "indifference". At least prophetic conflict implies that prophecy matters. Conflict may also help clarify ideas, achieve intellectual or institutional progress, or as Joyner suggests "purify" prophecy.<sup>5</sup> This, however, need not imply a developmental concept of truth,<sup>6</sup> or a Hegelian thesis-antithesis-synthesis model.<sup>7</sup> These are anathema to the prophetic concern for truth and justice. Religious conflict is also inevitable because of the distance between our symbols and the Divine reality.<sup>8</sup> But again this need not entail a liberal acceptance of a pluralism which avoids contending for the faith.

### **Sociological Conflict**

Conflict also maintains social equilibrium by assigning status, through discerning true and false prophets. We can see this in the "ritualized combat" of South American shamans.<sup>9</sup> Perhaps seeing contemporary prophetic conflicts as competition in a plural religious market place is a present-day equivalent.<sup>10</sup> But shamanic competition assumes a unitary society, in which shamanism is an accepted part of the social ideology. Neither today's society, nor the Church, unitedly accepts prophecy, though it is accepted within the lifeworld of certain sub-groups.

Because there is no overall plausibility structure, conflict over prophecy and the resultant ridicule, can cause disillusionment, unbelief and departure from the sub-group. On the other hand, for some it may confirm their beliefs through confrontation. Today's situation may therefore be more akin to the Old Testament, in which national

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<sup>5</sup> Joyner, *The Prophetic Ministry*, p. 37

<sup>6</sup> e.g. Maurice Wiles, *op cit*, pp. 4 ff

<sup>7</sup> e.g. John Rex, "Power, Conflict, Values and Change," in Peter Worsley (Ed.), *Modern Sociology. Introductory Readings* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), p. 447

<sup>8</sup> See Williams, *op cit*, p. 57 ff

<sup>9</sup> Burke O. Lang, "Social Dimensions of Prophetic Conflict," in Culley & Overholt, *op cit*, p. 34 f

<sup>10</sup> See Beckford, *op cit*, p. 90



prophets operated within their own plausibility structures as spiritual intermediaries for their own people.<sup>11</sup> A plural society will therefore exhibit *plural prophecy*, with all its difficulties for discernment. Simmel however still assumed the eventual achievement of consensual unity was the desirable goal of conflict. But in practice, prophetic conflict may be ongoing, and unity only a spiritual and eschatological reality.<sup>12</sup>

Unlike Desroche's abstract typology of conflict,<sup>13</sup> this chapter describes three conflicts and examines the factors influencing them. There are two kinds of conflict: *Inter-Model Conflict*, in which controversies arise between representatives of the different schools; and *Intra-Model Conflict*, in which prophets operating within the same prophetic model clash about particular prophecies, or prophetic statements and actions. This is similar to Wesley Kort's contention that controversies erupt over differing theological "meaning effects" - on matters known only to heaven, to most people, or to all.<sup>14</sup> Instead of his view that only the first is "prophetic", however, the identification of different prophetic models suggests that any may generate conflict. For example, poverty may be known to all but its (heavenly) significance missed.

### **Prophetic Conflict**

*Intra-Model Conflict* is more intense than *Inter-Model Conflict*, because combatants inhabit the same lifeworld, and resulting competition to control the shared symbol system demands more complete personal involvement since it threatens basic assumptions.<sup>15</sup> It is also the level where genuine *Prophetic Conflict* occurs - "prophet against prophet".<sup>16</sup> Where *Inter-Model Conflict* centres on *Manner*, *Intra-Model*

<sup>11</sup> See Wilson, *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel*, p. 133

<sup>12</sup> See Jon Sobrino, *The True Church and the Poor* (London: SCM, 1985[1981]), p. 217

<sup>13</sup> See Desroche, *op cit*, pp. 129 ff

<sup>14</sup> Worsley A. Kort, *Bound to Differ. The Dynamics of Theological Discourse* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), pp. 48 ff

<sup>15</sup> See Lewis A. Coser, "The Functions of Social Conflict," in Coser & Rosenberg, *op cit*, p. 219

<sup>16</sup> See Simon J. De Vries, *Prophet Against Prophet. The Role of the Micaiah Narrative (1 Kings 22) in the Development of the Early Prophetic Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MICH: Eerdmans, 1978)



*Conflict* concentrates on which *Messenger* and *Message* is authentic. This is so not only for those with a conflict model of society, but those who presuppose a consensus model. Although conservative Christians stress social harmony, they do so within a larger cosmic disharmony. They have a conflict model not merely of society but the universe, and this affects prophecy.

As de Vries indicates with regard to Israel, prophetic conflict is frequently a symptom of underlying social tensions, in this case between King and Prophets. In addition to the social determinants of religious conflict,<sup>17</sup> however, “religious revelations” themselves provoke “intragroup conflict”.<sup>18</sup> Indeed insofar as God’s Word involves confrontation “against us”,<sup>19</sup> then the possibility of conflict is always present.

After analysing one example of *Inter-Model conflict*, and two of *Intra-Model Conflict*, this chapter will therefore examine *Institutional Conflict*, the power relationship between prophet and ecclesia, before looking at *Investigating Conflict* and the criteria for evaluating prophecy.

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<sup>17</sup> See McGuire, *op cit*, pp. 185 ff

<sup>18</sup> *ibid*, p. 193

<sup>19</sup> Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics I.1*, p. 91



## 2. INTER-MODEL CONFLICT: CULTURE AND CREATION

The Conservative-Protestant dispute with Charismatic-Pentecostal prophecy is covered in Chapter Two. This section examines conflict between Cultural-Political and Creational-Pagan prophecy. Cultural-Political prophets oppose the *Message* of Creational-Pagan prophecy, prioritising socio-political rather than ecological, personal change. Chiefly, however, the conflict involves *Manner* - Cultural-Political prophecy's rational social analysis against Cultural-Pagan mystical irrationalism.

### Jubilee Group

Despite the Jubilee Group's sympathy towards mysticism, they employ rationalistic sociological analysis rooted in Marx's critique of religious alienation. Marxism shapes Leech's political critique of New Age spirituality. Although he has belatedly incorporated ecological concerns,<sup>20</sup> he criticises single-issue politics like the ecology movement, as a product of disillusionment with politics and despair about the possibilities of large-scale transformation.<sup>21</sup> His feminism too is a late development,<sup>22</sup> and women still appear marginalised within the Jubilee Group.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, Leech disagrees with Mascall's support for prophetic antipathy toward female idols. For Leech it does not matter whether feminine images replace masculine, but whether Divine representations should be exclusively male.<sup>24</sup>

Leech welcomed Matthew Fox's positive attitude to material reality,<sup>25</sup> although Leech also criticised the cult-like personal devotion Fox attracted. He also criticised the lack of political awareness, and consumerism of Creation Spirituality and the New Age.

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<sup>20</sup> See Leech, *The Eye of the Storm*, pp. 67 ff

<sup>21</sup> *ibid*, pp. 132 f

<sup>22</sup> *ibid*, pp. 80 ff

<sup>23</sup> See Richard Toews, *The Jubilee Group in the Church of England: The Prophetic Voice of a Community in Ekklesia* (Vancouver, BC: Simon Fraser University MA Thesis, May 1997), pp. 83 ff

<sup>24</sup> See Leech, *True God*, p. 374

<sup>25</sup> *ibid*, pp. 242 f



Moreover, Leech felt that they and the Ecofeminists lacked actual political recommendations.<sup>26</sup> This critique is echoed in a Jubilee publication by Angela West.<sup>27</sup> She calls Fox a “prophet of recreation”,<sup>28</sup> an exponent of “Californian ethnic thought”.<sup>29</sup> His hedonism produces “political naivety” when dealing with specifics, and ignores the “judgment of God” on “false prophets” - including, she hints, Fox himself.<sup>30</sup>

## Feminists

Although feminists agree on the ultimate goal of overcoming patriarchy, they display differences of approach which correspond to the distinction between Cultural-Political and Creational-Pagan prophecy. For example, Ynestra King distinguishes between “radical rationalist feminists” and “radical cultural feminists”. According to King the former oppose the latter’s emphasis on internal psychological and symbolical liberation at the expense of political change.<sup>31</sup> Meanwhile, Val Plumwood and Joni Seager have criticised the “reversal” of dualism in Ecofeminism,<sup>32</sup> by which a new “essentialism” defines men as inherently bad and women as good.<sup>33</sup>

Seager’s and Plumwood’s critique here corresponds to the modernist attack on spirituality as such. Although Plumwood accepts that nature displays a teleological intentionality,<sup>34</sup> she resists any pantheist implications since it is “unclear” what function a deity would have with no separate existence.<sup>35</sup> Her critique also applies to process thought, for if God is merely our fellow-sufferer, then believing makes no

<sup>26</sup> See Leech, *The Eye of the Storm*, pp. 72 f

<sup>27</sup> See West, *Matthew Fox: Blessing for Whom?* pp. 6 ff

<sup>28</sup> *ibid*, p. 9

<sup>29</sup> *ibid*, p. 12

<sup>30</sup> *ibid*, pp. 19 f

<sup>31</sup> e.g. Ynestra King, “Healing the Wounds: Feminism, Ecology, and Nature/Culture Dualism,” in Alison M. Jaggar & Susan R. Bordo, *Gender/Body/Knowledge. Feminist Reconstructions of Being and Knowing* (New Brunswick/London: Rutgers University Press, 1989), p. 122

<sup>32</sup> Val Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (London/New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 3

<sup>33</sup> Joni Seager, *Earth Follies. Feminism, politics and the environment* (London: Earthscan, 1993), p. 5

<sup>34</sup> See Plumwood, *op cit*, pp. 131, 207

<sup>35</sup> *ibid*, p. 127



operational difference. If as Anne Primavesi has written, there will be no heavenly deliverer,<sup>36</sup> any theism can only be a Hindu-type pantheism, as Primavesi herself admits.<sup>37</sup> For Plumwood, however, atheism is the logical conclusion since there is no separate role for any god/dess. Seager likewise, while recognising that the goddess “myth” is inspirational, regards it as an “illusion”.<sup>38</sup>

Besides this rationalist attack on spirituality, Christian Feminists Angela West and Sara Maitland also critique Ecofeminism, although whereas rationalists are suspicious of symbolism because of its origins in patriarchal culture,<sup>39</sup> West and Maitland favour the symbolic, albeit emphasising different symbols. This, however, is not *Prophetic Conflict* as such, because the protagonists do not explicitly claim to be ‘prophetesses,’ West’s discussion of revelation has implications for prophecy. Maitland also regarded her history of Christian feminism as a “combination of journalism and prophecy”,<sup>40</sup> and claimed the prophetic role of recalling the Church to serve the oppressed.<sup>41</sup> In addition, her mystical stories, which she experiences as something to “receive” rather than think up,<sup>42</sup> are similar to Borges “magical realism” rather than “social realism”.<sup>43</sup> Maitland’s artistic interpretation of prophecy is also revealed in her assertion that the Church needs both “prophets and poets” to redress the balance between “charismatic and ordained ministry”.<sup>44</sup>

West and Maitland agree with much in Ecofeminism, but their prophecy belongs to the Cultural-Political rather than the Creational-Pagan model. Their criticisms of Ecofeminism therefore are an example of *Inter-Model* rather than *Intra-Model conflict*.

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<sup>36</sup> See Primavesi, *From Apocalypse to Genesis*, p. 73

<sup>37</sup> *ibid*, p. 58

<sup>38</sup> Seager, *op cit*, pp. 251 f

<sup>39</sup> See Ellen Cronan Rose, “The Good Mother. From Gaia to Gilead,” in Adams, *op cit* p. 151

<sup>40</sup> Sara Maitland, *A Map of the new Country. Women and Christianity* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983), p. xii

<sup>41</sup> *ibid*, p. 21

<sup>42</sup> *ibid*, p. vii

<sup>43</sup> Sara Maitland, *A Book of Spells* (London: Minerva, 1990[1987]), pp. 166 ff

<sup>44</sup> Sara Maitland, *A Big-Enough God. Artful Theology* (London: Mowbrays, 1995), p. 144



They echo rationalist criticisms that Ecofeminism has erected a new dualist essentialism between men and women,<sup>45</sup> which fails to incorporate the historical, cultural construction of gender.<sup>46</sup> In addition, Maitland asserts, much ecological theology expresses an “ecological utopianism”, in which nature is seen a-historically as static and perfect. To counterbalance this, we need historical and political explanations.<sup>47</sup> As West recounts, in her defence of Augustine, only locating the human origin of evil, i.e. sin, can account for suffering.<sup>48</sup> Thus she calls for a “combination of Marxist analysis and the Christian gospel”,<sup>49</sup> accusing idealist attempts to change society through consciousness-raising as products of western bourgeois religion<sup>50</sup> which reflect Enlightenment rationalist optimism.<sup>51</sup>

### Authority

West’s and Maitland’s critique is partly a Christianised version of the rationalist attack. As a prophetic movement develops, the pioneers react against ideological changes.<sup>52</sup> West’s account of her progressive disillusionment with feminism during the 1980s, parallels the evolution from “Socialist Feminism” to “Radical Feminism”<sup>53</sup> from which Ecofeminism sprang.<sup>54</sup> West and Maitland, however, also challenge feminism’s emphasis on (women’s) experience as normative for theology. West describes this as finding “authoritative revelation” in the “emancipatory praxis” of feminism,<sup>55</sup> so that Ecofeminism’s revelation of connectedness corresponds to the experience of western

<sup>45</sup> See Angela West, “A Faith for Feminists?” in Jo Garcia & Sara Maitland (Eds.), *Walking on Water. Women talk about Spirituality* (London: Virago, 1983), p. 71

<sup>46</sup> See Maitland, *A Big-Enough God*, p. 91

<sup>47</sup> *ibid*, pp. 32 ff

<sup>48</sup> See Angela West, *Deadly Innocence. Feminism and the Mythology of Sin* (London: Cassell, 1995), pp. 105 ff

<sup>49</sup> West, “A Faith for Feminists?” p. 73

<sup>50</sup> *ibid*, p. 72

<sup>51</sup> *ibid*, p. 79

<sup>52</sup> See p. 178

<sup>53</sup> Storkey, *op cit*, pp. 57 ff

<sup>54</sup> Elaine Storkey, *Interview* (10.7.96)

<sup>55</sup> West, *Deadly Innocence*, p. 5



bourgeois intellectuals.<sup>56</sup> Their “liberal pluralism”<sup>57</sup> simply reflects the consumer’s rejection of Christianity’s particularist single-brand.<sup>58</sup>

West wonders, however, what the criteria are for evaluating rival moral claims, if there are only competing viewpoints. Moreover, she argues that, if one reimagines God in one’s own image, then there cannot be “any word from God”, because He “no longer has any voice”.<sup>59</sup> Prophecy is dead. There is only class or ethnic ideology - in feminism’s case the abstract language of academia.<sup>60</sup> West turned away from this idolatrous “narcissism” of regarding her life as a “sacred text” of revelation,<sup>61</sup> and instead relativised it by appealing to the “truly other” of the Christ event.<sup>62</sup> As a Catholic, this meant a “reevaluation of tradition” broader than modern women’s experience.<sup>63</sup> Tradition therefore becomes an “ongoing revelation”, discerning God’s activity in history.<sup>64</sup> West and Maitland consequently differ from liberal and socialist feminist critics of Ecofeminism. Although they repeat socialist criticisms, they also perceive the need for objective norms against postmodernist relativism. In effect, to defend socialist modernism they go behind it to premodern tradition.

Unlike Mary Grey’s “traditioning”,<sup>65</sup> however, West’s and Maitland’s is prioritising rather than pluralising. That is, the issue of “authority” is central. Maitland writes that she needs a “tradition” to free her from “personal experience”, and provide a standard by which her beliefs and “orthodoxy” can be “tested”.<sup>66</sup> For both West and Maitland, this standard is the “Christ event”. Paradoxically therefore, in order to

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<sup>56</sup> *ibid*, p. 153

<sup>57</sup> *ibid*, p. 181

<sup>58</sup> *ibid*, p. 43

<sup>59</sup> *ibid*, p. 126

<sup>60</sup> *ibid*, pp. 130 f

<sup>61</sup> West, “A Faith For Feminists?”, p. 84

<sup>62</sup> West, *Deadly Innocence*, p. 197

<sup>63</sup> *ibid*, p. 91

<sup>64</sup> *ibid*, p. 144

<sup>65</sup> Grey, *Beyond the Dark Night*, pp. 80 ff

<sup>66</sup> Maitland, *A Big-Enough God*, p. 172



defend a radical politics, West and Maitland depend on a conservative theology. They attempt to root Cultural-Political prophecy in an older prophetic model (which this thesis has not had space to examine) - the Catholic-Papal model.<sup>67</sup>

Their orthodoxy, however, is an idiosyncratic one, an individualistic bourgeois preference for tradition which actually undermines tradition. Their premodern traditionism is actually another version of postmodern nostalgia, little different from kitch Catholic romanticism, which will remain trapped in pluralist relativisation and capitalist commodification.

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<sup>67</sup> See p. 6



### 3. INTRA MODEL CONFLICT: RIVAL REVELATIONS

#### Kansas City Prophecy

The rise and fall of the Kansas City Prophets during the 1980s is a prime example of prophetic conflict involving *Messenger*, *Message* and *Manner*. Mike Bickle founded the Kansas City Fellowship in 1982. Initially, as a conservative evangelical, he was suspicious of the prophets who joined the Church,<sup>68</sup> but through predictions of natural occurrences they persuaded him of their authenticity.<sup>69</sup> Bob Jones was an ex-marine who had struggled with alcoholism and mental illness; John Paul Jackson came from a Pentecostal background; and Paul Cain had been active in the 1950s Healing Revival, but after an illness had withdrawn because of financial corruption and hype.<sup>70</sup> Besides using the word of knowledge, they predicted an imminent world revival and a “new breed” of believer exercising great spiritual power. In 1986, Kansas City Fellowship established Grace Training Centre to propagate their message and planned a prophetic community called Shiloh.<sup>71</sup>

Cain met John Wimber in 1988, Cain’s authenticity vouchsafed by an earthquake he predicted.<sup>72</sup> With Wimber facing sex scandals among the Vineyard leadership, Cain encouraged him to assert his authority within the Association of Vineyard Churches (AVC).<sup>73</sup> Wimber then began promoting their post-millennialist revivalism and moved away from his earlier pre-millennialism.<sup>74</sup> In 1989, following accusations against the Kansas City Fellowship, Bickle brought the Church (renamed Metro Vineyard) within

<sup>68</sup> See Mike Bickle, *Growing in the Prophetic*, p. 17 ff

<sup>69</sup> *ibid*, pp. 35 ff

<sup>70</sup> See Paul Cain, “My New Ministry,” in *Holiness Unto the Lord* (Conference Teaching Notes, October 1990) (Anaheim, CA: Mercy Publishing, 1990), pp. 171 ff

<sup>71</sup> See Albert James Dager, “Latter-Day Prophets. The Kansas City Connection,” *Media Spotlight Special Report* (Redmond WA: Media Spotlight, 1990), pp. 5 ff

<sup>72</sup> See John Wimber, “Introducing Prophetic Ministry,” *Equipping the Saints* (Special UK Edition, Fall 1990), p. 5

<sup>73</sup> See John Wimber, “Prophetic Practice,” *Today* (October 1990), p. 4

<sup>74</sup> See John Oakes, “Profile. A Pastor at Heart,” *Today* (December 1989), p. 4



the AVC.<sup>75</sup> The prophets' relevance to Britain derives from predictions that London would witness revival in October 1990.<sup>76</sup> David Pytches' book<sup>77</sup> spread the news, and he held a leaders' conference in March 1990. The prophets themselves arrived in July, as a prelude to the October London docklands conference, to which John Wimber came in anticipation....

### Controversy

The Kansas City Prophets stirred up local and national controversy in the United States.<sup>78</sup> Ernie Gruen, a charismatic pastor in Kansas City, perhaps threatened by the new Church, made accusations which were repeated by a conservative alliance of evangelical and traditional Pentecostal cult-watchers. Their criticisms can be summarised as follows:<sup>79</sup> *operational* - false prophecies, manipulation and Church take-overs through controlling prophecies; *spiritual* - demonic inspiration; *historical* - guilt by association with heretical movements like the Latter Rain, sonship, and dominionism; *doctrinal* - overturning Biblical authority and setting doctrine by prophecy.

The prophets took countermeasures, with Paul Cain warning people not to criticise prophets<sup>80</sup> and Rick Joyner threatening that God would remove Pastors who opposed prophecy.<sup>81</sup> Wimber however engaged in a tactical damage-limitation exercise, which persuaded Gruen to drop some charges and leave the rest to Wimber's oversight.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> See John Wimber, "A Response to Ernie Gruen's Controversy with Kansas City fellowship," *Equipping the Saints* (Special UK Edition, Fall 1990), p. 3

<sup>76</sup> John Mumford, "What are the prophets saying?" talk at *Prophecy Today* Conference (Video Tape) (St. Andrews Church, Chorleywood, London (7 March 1990)

<sup>77</sup> See Pytches, *Some Said It Thundered*

<sup>78</sup> See Maudlin, *op cit*, pp. 18 ff

<sup>79</sup> See Dager, *op cit*, pp. 6 ff; & Stephen F. Cannon, "Old Wine in Old Wineskins. A Look at the Kansas City Fellowship," *Personal Freedom Outreach. The Quarterly Journal* (Vol. 10, No. 4, October/December 1990), pp. 1 ff

<sup>80</sup> See Paul Cain, "The Prophet," *Christ for the Nations* (September 1989), p. 5; quoted in Dager, *op cit*, p. 11

<sup>81</sup> See Joyner, "A Vision of the Harvest," in *The Harvest Trilogy*, p. 8

<sup>82</sup> See Wimber, "A Response to Pastor Ernie Gruen's Controversy with Kansas City Fellowship," p.



Wimber's approach can be summarised as follows:<sup>83</sup> *constraints* - prohibiting controlling prophecies, and discouraging over-dependency on prophecy for guidance; *doctrine* - prophecy would not set doctrine and Vineyard would avoid jargon from heretical groups; *discipline* - Jackson would receive theological training, Jones was removed from public teaching roles, and Bickle repented publicly of pride and exaggeration.<sup>84</sup> In addition, the administration of prophecy was refined. Bickle developed a three-fold method of discernment, which distinguished between "revelation", "application" and "interpretation". This protected prophecy's status by allowing the possibility of misapplication or misinterpretation.<sup>85</sup>

### **Prophetic Conflict**

Although this controversy involved American and British Pentecostals, it echoed the Conservative-Protestant critique of prophecy.<sup>86</sup> The transition to *Prophetic Conflict* occurred with Clifford Hill's intervention. He still sees the Kansas City Prophets as "false prophets"<sup>87</sup> - rival prophets with rival revelations. Hill was unimpressed when he visited Kansas City in 1989, and opposed Pytches' invitation to them.<sup>88</sup> He repeated Gruen's charges, adding to accusations of "paranormal" activity by asserting that Bob Jones was influenced by an evil spirit,<sup>89</sup> which he discerned through a God-given "spirit of disquiet".<sup>90</sup> Moreover, according to Hill, the word of knowledge was a "trivialisation of prophecy".<sup>91</sup> Instead of triumphalistic pandering to the flesh, he claimed society's sinfulness meant there could be "no revival in Britain without repentance".<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> See John Wimber, "Introduction to the Contemporary Prophetic Movement Associated with the Vineyard Christian Fellowship," *Prophecy Seminar Lecture Notes* (Anaheim CA: Mercy Publishing, 1989), pp. 7 ff

<sup>84</sup> See Dave Roberts, "Kansas in the Spotlight," *Today* (October 1990), p. 17

<sup>85</sup> Mike Bickle, "Guidelines for the Prophetic ministry," *Prophecy Seminar Lecture Notes*, pp. 19 ff

<sup>86</sup> See Kay, *Prophecy!*, p. 100

<sup>87</sup> Hill, *Interview 2*

<sup>88</sup> See Clifford Hill, "Kansas City Prophets," *Prophecy Today* (Vol. 6, No. 4, July/August 1990), p. 6 f

<sup>89</sup> Clifford Hill, "Here Today, Where Tomorrow?" in Clifford Hill et al, *Blessing the Church?* p. 194

<sup>90</sup> Hill, *A Prophetic People*, p. 129

<sup>91</sup> Hill, "Kansas City Prophets," p. 5

<sup>92</sup> *ibid*, p. 7



What lay behind Hill's hostility? Joyner believes attacks frequently "mask territorial preservation".<sup>93</sup> Regarding Hill, Kansas City Prophetic Director Michael Sullivant thinks Hill was jealous of their ability,<sup>94</sup> while David Pytches accuses Hill of claiming a "monopoly" on prophecy.<sup>95</sup> This economic analogy<sup>96</sup> helps to understand the dynamics when an "ex-monopoly" is challenged and has to compete in the marketplace.<sup>97</sup> After honing his product throughout the 1980s, Hill was the British market leader threatened by global competition. This American import even caused a split in Hill's own Church.<sup>98</sup>

### Aftermath

Eventually Bob Jones was disciplined for "sexual misconduct",<sup>99</sup> as ironically so was Gruen.<sup>100</sup> Jones initially accepted discipline, but later began working with Joyner, who accepted him while lamenting the lack of a "forum" to address issues.<sup>101</sup> Discipline is indeed a major weakness in a network with no central authority structure. Paul Cain also left Kansas City to work with Joyner, whose rise to prominence coincided therefore with Kansas City's decline. Eventually, Wimber would regret introducing the Prophets into the Vineyard, because of their Latter Rain theology and because they distracted from mission.<sup>102</sup> Wimber's death in 1997 would later prompt a gratuitous obituary from Hill.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Joyner, *Epic Battles of the Last Days*, p. 31

<sup>94</sup> Michael Sullivant, *Interview* (14.8.97)

<sup>95</sup> David Pytches, *Interview* (18.10.96)

<sup>96</sup> Peter L. Berger, "A Market Model for the Analysis of Ecumenicity," *Social Research* (Vol. 30, No. 1, Spring 1963), pp. 77 ff

<sup>97</sup> Berger, *The Sacred Canopy*, p. 138

<sup>98</sup> John Starr, *Interview* (12.12.96)

<sup>99</sup> John Wimber, "Fallen Leaders in the Vineyard. How should we treat them?" *Renewal* (March 1992), p. 20

<sup>100</sup> Pytches, *Interview*

<sup>101</sup> Rick Joyner, "Answers To Commonly Asked Questions," *The Morning Star Journal* (Vol. 2, No. 2), p. 84

<sup>102</sup> See Vic Francis, "Keeping the Vision," *Renewal* (No. 234, November 1995), pp. 18 ff

<sup>103</sup> See Clifford Hill, "John Wimber," *Prophecy Today* (Vol. 14, No. 1, January/February 1998), p. 35



Several explanations emerged for the nonappearance of revival in Britain in 1990. Pytches lists three possibilities: firstly, the prophets were wrong; second, opposition prevented fulfilment; thirdly, “something was planted” such as the “Alpha” evangelistic programme.<sup>104</sup> John Wimber also maintained that only “tokens” of revival had been predicted.<sup>105</sup> All these appear to be cases of “cognitive dissonance”, a concept which Leon Festinger<sup>106</sup> and Robert Carroll<sup>107</sup> have applied to failures in contemporary and Biblical prophecy respectively. But as Carroll elsewhere admits, explanations of unmet expectations are normal processes of adaptation in all belief-systems.<sup>108</sup>

Mike Bickle perceived the 1990 problems as “divine discipline”,<sup>109</sup> and his Church has used the experience to develop a routinised “prophetic etiquette”.<sup>110</sup> Matters came full circle, however, when in 1996 Metro Christian Fellowship left the Vineyard. This was partly out of sympathy with the Toronto Airport Fellowship which was expelled from the AVC, but also because Metro felt the AVC had restricted them<sup>111</sup> and driven prophecy “underground” after 1990. The renewed vision for Intercession, Holiness, Offering to the poor, and Prophecy (IHOP) was seen as a return to Metro’s original vocation,<sup>112</sup> and land was acquired for the abandoned Shiloh project, with Paul Cain as senior prophet.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Pytches, *Interview*

<sup>105</sup> John Wimber, “Revival Fire,” *Renewal* (No. 184, September 1991), p. 27

<sup>106</sup> Leon Festinger, Henry W. Riecken & Stanley Schachter, *When Prophecy Fails* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956)

<sup>107</sup> Robert P. Carroll, “Prophecy and Dissonance. A Theoretical Approach to the Prophetic Tradition,” *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* (No. 92, 1980), pp. 108 ff

<sup>108</sup> See Robert P. Carroll, “Cognitive Dissonance,” in R. J. Coggins & J. L. Houlden (Eds.), *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* (London: SCM, 1990), p. 123

<sup>109</sup> Bickle, *Growing in the Prophetic*, p. 91

<sup>110</sup> Michael Sullivant, *Prophetic Etiquette. How To Avoid The Abuse of Prophetic Ministry* (Kansas City MO: Metro Christian Fellowship, 1996)

<sup>111</sup> See Sam Storms, “A New Name and a Renewed Focus,” *Metro Christian Fellowship Catalog* (Fall 1996), p. 1

<sup>112</sup> Michael Sullivant, *Interview*

<sup>113</sup> Paul Cain, Talk at *Passion For Jesus Conference* (Kansas City, 17 - 21 August 1997)



## Continuing Struggle

Clifford Hill regards 1990 as a “turning point”,<sup>114</sup> since when the Charismatic movement has become a “stumbling block” to the Gospel<sup>115</sup> and turned inwards to experientialism. Like Hank Hanegraaf,<sup>116</sup> Hill sees the Toronto blessing as a successor to Kansas City, whose “false prophecy” introduced a “false spirit” into the Church.<sup>117</sup> Hill reacted by calling Leadership Consultations in 1995 and 1996, which presented a report to the Evangelical Alliance.<sup>118</sup> This strategy has led him into an alliance with conservative evangelicals, and he has advocated a “Reformed Charismatic Network”.<sup>119</sup> Many of his supporters are disillusioned charismatics, from renewal’s first wave, influenced by the struggles between IVF (Inter-Varsity Fellowship) and SCM (Student Christian Movement) in the 1950s and 1960s over Scriptural authority. Newer leaders, however, do not share the concern for doctrine which this created. As Joyner observed such conflicts are in part between “spiritual generations”.<sup>120</sup> Hill’s stance is therefore part of a general charismatic revisionism, as earlier renewal leaders recoil from later excesses.<sup>121</sup>

The Toronto controversy also illustrates the rivalry between two prophetic camps over the *Message* - of revival. While Hill criticises Toronto’s revival expectations, Texan Prophet Dale Gentry helped launch Gerald Coates’ revival meetings in 1997.<sup>122</sup> Hill desires revival, but his earlier optimism<sup>123</sup> has now been replaced by pessimism, although he still sees an opportunity for effective evangelism.<sup>124</sup> According to Hill,

<sup>114</sup> Hill, “Here today, Where Tomorrow?” p. 218

<sup>115</sup> *ibid*, p. 199

<sup>116</sup> See Hank Hanegraaff, *Counterfeit Revival* (Dallas, TX: Word, 1997)

<sup>117</sup> Clifford Hill, Comments during Open Forum, *Leaders Consultation* October 1996

<sup>118</sup> See The Centre for contemporary Ministry, *A Call to charismatic Leaders. Statement from the Bawtry Hall Charismatic Leaders consultation, October 1996* (Bedford: The Centre for Contemporary Ministry, n.d.)

<sup>119</sup> Clifford Hill, *Interview 1* (15.7.96)

<sup>120</sup> Joyner, *Epic Battles of the Last Days*, p. 34

<sup>121</sup> cf. Smail, Walker & Wright, *op cit*; & Douglas McBain, *Fire over the Waters. Renewal among the Baptists and others from the 1960s to the 1990s* (London: DLT, 1997)

<sup>122</sup> I visited some of these in July 1997.

<sup>123</sup> See Hill, *Towards the Dawn*, p. 180

<sup>124</sup> See Clifford Hill, “The Time has Come!” *Prophecy Today* (Vol. 13, No. 1, January/February 1997), p. 5



false prophets promise prosperity, while true prophets prepare people for judgment.<sup>125</sup> Consequently while Coates put a redactive spin on one prophecy concerning the death of Diana Princess of Wales promising revival,<sup>126</sup> Hill proclaimed another presenting judgment.<sup>127</sup> Paul Slennett and Jim Smith, an Anglican clergyman, repeated the call for repentance,<sup>128</sup> as did Tony and Patricia Higton, also Anglicans, who run a prophetic ministry called “A Biblical Witness to our Nation” (ABWON).<sup>129</sup> Although initially critical of the blessing,<sup>130</sup> however, they later embraced it,<sup>131</sup> and Tony Higton claims to be moving away from the prophetic “doom and gloom brigade”.<sup>132</sup>

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The division sunders scriptural prophecy’s “double emphasis” of judgment and redemption,<sup>133</sup> and makes discernment self-referencing as prophecies are evaluated within their own sub-plausibility groups not the whole Church. Furthermore, while both camps want Christian influence in society, revivalists embrace the religious free market, while critics are nostalgic for a unified religious culture complete with state Church. Despite its political sublimation, “inward, ecstatic experience” threatens religious conservatives through its “inner freedom” and uncontrollability.<sup>134</sup>

As Higton’s case illustrates, individualist and experiential ecstatic prophecy will probably supersede Hill’s corporatist and authoritarian, traditional model. Ecstatic prophecy meets felt needs for subjective experience, rather than imposing objective

<sup>125</sup> See Hill, *Shaking the Nations*, p. 216

<sup>126</sup> See Gerald Coates, *A Call to Pray for The Nation* (Cobham: Pioneer, 1997)

<sup>127</sup> See Clifford Hill, “Diana, Princess of Wales,” *Prophecy Today* (Vol. 13, No. 6, November/December 1997), p. 35

<sup>128</sup> See Jim Smith, *Is there any hope for England?* (Birtley: Graphite books, 1993)

<sup>129</sup> See Patricia Higton, *Christians at the Crossroads. Revival and Judgment: a Prophetic Challenge* (London: Marshall Pickering, 1991), pp. 15 f

<sup>130</sup> See Tony Higton, “Appendix. Suggested Criteria for Assessing Charismatic Phenomena,” in The Centre for Contemporary Ministry, *Charismatic Crossroads. The Report of a Leadership Consultation on the Current Situation in the Charismatic Churches* (London: PWM Team Ministries, 1995), pp. 15 ff

<sup>131</sup> See Tony Higton, “An Elder Brother Joins The Party,” *Spread the Fire* (April 1996), pp. 8 ff

<sup>132</sup> Tony Higton, *Prophecy!* (London: Triangle Books, 1998), pp. 72 ff

<sup>133</sup> Milton, *op cit*, pp. 28 ff

<sup>134</sup> Mannheim, *op cit*, pp. 213 f



doctrinal fiats, and reflects the shift from a production-based to a consumption-based religious economy. Each *Manner* expresses the predicament of a middle class fraction - one prospering, the other threatened by change. Hill himself traces the charismatic movement's problems to its individualistic hedonistic origins in 1960s pop culture.<sup>135</sup> The ensuing conflict seems to justify his prediction of the "disintegration" of the charismatic movement,<sup>136</sup> although it may simply reflect the disintegration of his own support.

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<sup>135</sup> See Clifford Hill, "A Child of the Age," in Hill et al, *Blessing the Church*, pp. 24 ff

<sup>136</sup> Hill, "Here today, Where Tomorrow?" p. 223



#### 4. INTRA-MODEL CONFLICT: RADICAL AND REALIST

##### Bosnia

Adrian Hastings and Keith Clements exemplify respectively radical and realist approaches to Cultural-Political prophecy's *Message*. The occasion for their controversy was the war in Bosnia. The World Council of Churches had a policy of neutrality towards the war, which the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland (CCBI) copied. In 1993 the CCBI sent a fact-finding mission to the former Yugoslavia. Their report was criticised by Adrian Hastings in *The Tablet*, *The Guardian*, and *Theology*.<sup>137</sup> He claimed that ecumenical relations with the Serbian Orthodox Church had prevented them from condemning the Bosnian genocide. A mixture of "perennial parochialism", "misguided ecumenism", "misguided pacifism" and "erastian" subservience to government had "nullified any prophetic voice".<sup>138</sup> Against their silence, he cited the example of Bishop Bell, who had spoken out prophetically against British mass-bombing of Germany during World War Two.<sup>139</sup>

Keith Clements had been on the CCBI team, and his response, written with Andrew Chandler, initiated the *prophetic conflict*. They agreed that Bishop Bell was prophetic, but pointed out that Bell's work was mostly behind the scenes and even pro-appeasement.<sup>140</sup> Clements,<sup>141</sup> and fellow-Baptist CCBI team member John Biggs,<sup>142</sup> felt Hasting's attitude was "simplistic" and Chandler that he ignored the situation's "complexity".<sup>143</sup> In practice, they felt "'prophecy'...in the public realm today" was hard to discern.<sup>144</sup>

<sup>137</sup> See Adrian Hastings, "Bosnia and the Churches," in Adrian Hastings, *The Shaping of Prophecy. Passion, Perception and Practicality* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1995), pp. 145 ff

<sup>138</sup> *ibid*, pp. 149 f

<sup>139</sup> *ibid*, p. 153

<sup>140</sup> See Keith Clements & Andrew Chandler, "A Live Bishop Bell in 1994? A Response to Adrian Hastings," *Theology* (Vol. XCVIII, No. 781, January/February 1995), p. 10

<sup>141</sup> Keith Clements, *Interview* (13.5.96)

<sup>142</sup> John Biggs, *Interview* (24.2.97)

<sup>143</sup> Andrew Chandler, *Interview* (23.10.97)

<sup>144</sup> Clements & Chandler, *op cit*, p. 12



Hastings considers himself to have always been prophetic.<sup>145</sup> Influenced by Yves Congar, before Vatican II, Hastings saw the prophet as an agent of the Church's renewal.<sup>146</sup> Then, in 1973, while working at the Catholic Institute of International Affairs, he learned of the 1972 Portuguese massacre at Wiriyamu in Mozambique. Hastings exposed the crime and made a speech in Lisbon during the 1974 Portuguese revolution. Although he has stated that the prophetic role is a "passing one",<sup>147</sup> Hastings clearly regarded his Bosnian intervention as a reprise of Wiriyamu.<sup>148</sup>

### Radical Prophecy

Perhaps because of Wiriyamu, SCM asked Hastings to contribute to their 1982 booklet.<sup>149</sup> This article, which he later revised, summarised Hastings' understanding of prophecy, not as "revelation of things unseen" but as a this-worldly message about contemporary society.<sup>150</sup> Hastings, however, criticised socialist political theology because it omits the unpredictable personal role of the "prophet". He also recognised the difficulty of prophesying in a tolerant "liberal society" which "muffles prophecy", but suggested that prophecy will become more needed as the West becomes less liberal.<sup>151</sup> This observation of the social limits of prophecy, may derive from his vocation as a historian, although he claims that the historian is not a "reliant exponent of futurology".<sup>152</sup>

<sup>145</sup> Adrian Hastings, *Interview* (23.10.97)

<sup>146</sup> See Adrian Hastings, "The Prophetic Role in the Living Church," *The Downside Review* (Vol. 74, No. 235, January 1956), pp. 38 ff

<sup>147</sup> Adrian Hastings, "Prophecy," in Adrian Hastings, *The Theology of a Protestant Catholic* (London: SCM/Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990), p. 60

<sup>148</sup> See Hastings, "Bosnia and the Churches," pp. 143 f

<sup>149</sup> Adrian Hastings, "Who Can Prophesy Today?" in McIlwraith, *The Burden of Prophecy*, pp. 39 ff

<sup>150</sup> Hastings, "Prophecy," p. 54

<sup>151</sup> *ibid*, p. 62 f

<sup>152</sup> Hastings, *A History of English Christianity*, p. 662



Hastings also maintains that the prophet must personally embody his message, as he feels he has done by being expelled from the priesthood after his marriage.<sup>153</sup> Although Hastings recognises the danger of “pseudo-religious” detachment from the world,<sup>154</sup> he also maintains that prophecy arises from prayer, silence and meditation.<sup>155</sup> Prophecy, writes Hastings, involves “passion” not academic neutrality,<sup>156</sup> and as “the moral analysis of society” it requires an “objectivity of truth and goodness”.<sup>157</sup> Although he recognises that an infallible Pope or Bible will not solve all moral problems, Hastings attacks postmodernism’s “sophisticated pessimism”.<sup>158</sup> According to Hastings, the postmodernist “privatisation of religion”, removing faith from the public sphere, corresponds to Thatcherite economic privatisation.<sup>159</sup> The non-realism of Don Cupitt’s *Sea of Faith* therefore offers no “ground for prophecy”, since there is no standpoint superior to that of the State.<sup>160</sup>

In describing 1960s secular theology,<sup>161</sup> Hastings refers to Donald MacKinnon’s observation that theological radicalism coincides with political conservatism.<sup>162</sup> Instead prophecy needs theological “realism” concerning the incarnation and the crucifixion, but also sin and guilt in order to condemn evil.<sup>163</sup> However, since teaching at a secular institution, Leeds University, he values theological pluralism and the difficulty of finding absolutes.<sup>164</sup> He now sees truth in such liberal Catholic terms as a “consensus” of the “historic continuity of the community”.<sup>165</sup> Although he opposes John Hick’s

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<sup>153</sup> Adrian Hastings, *Interview*

<sup>154</sup> Hastings, “Prophecy,” p. 67

<sup>155</sup> See Adrian Hastings, “Between Prayer and Politics: On Being a Christian Today,” in *The Shaping of Prophecy*, P. 19

<sup>156</sup> Adrian Hastings, “Is Passion Needed for Perception?” in Hastings, *The Shaping of Prophecy*, pp. 8 ff

<sup>157</sup> Adrian Hastings, “Introductory,” in *The Shaping of Prophecy*, pp. 6 f

<sup>158</sup> *ibid*, pp. 4 f

<sup>159</sup> Adrian Hastings, “Theology and Contemporary Reality,” in *The Shaping of Prophecy*, p. 31

<sup>160</sup> Hastings, “Between Prayer and Politics,” p. 19

<sup>161</sup> Hastings, *A History of English Christianity*, p. 545

<sup>162</sup> See Donald MacKinnon, *The Stripping of the Altars. The Gore Memorial Lecture and Other Pieces* (Edinburgh: Fontana, 1969), p. 11

<sup>163</sup> Adrian Hastings, “Guilt,” in *The Shaping of Prophecy*, p. 167 ff

<sup>164</sup> Hastings, *Interview*

<sup>165</sup> Adrian Hastings, “Community, Consensus and Truth,” in *The Theology of a Protestant Catholic*, p. 12



“pluralist theology”, he is open to the “full pluralism of human experience”.<sup>166</sup> Having thus made his professional peace with liberal pluralism, Hastings’ desire for objectivity may reveal only a residual Thomism.

### **Bureaucratic Realism**

Keith Clements is a Baptist minister. Having taught at Bristol Baptist College, he became the CCBI Coordinating Secretary for international affairs, and in 1997 the General Secretary for the Conference of European Churches. He describes his job as facilitating not leading and therefore “one step from being prophetic”.<sup>167</sup> This demonstrates the dilemma of the institutional bureaucrat with “the responsibility of ecumenical diplomacy”<sup>168</sup> - a conundrum also experienced by Paul Oestreicher who sees himself prophetically,<sup>169</sup> and who is similarly criticised.<sup>170</sup> For Andrew Chandler the choice is between “effectiveness” or “isolation” on the sidelines.<sup>171</sup> Hastings acknowledges this when he attributes their differences to their career paths, describing Clements as a Baptist who joined the establishment, whereas Hastings moved “from the centre to the periphery”,<sup>172</sup> unable even to celebrate Mass.<sup>173</sup> Not class therefore, but their material position within their ecclesiastical structures shaped their prophetism.

Clements’ moderation also derives from Bonhoeffer’s influence, who tried to love Germany, even while opposing it. For Clements, this love for the “real country” not an abstract vision, avoids the self-righteousness of the “prophetic voice”.<sup>174</sup> Chandler

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<sup>166</sup> Adrian Hastings, “Pluralism: Theology and Religious Studies,” in *The Theology of a Protestant Catholic*, p. 40

<sup>167</sup> Keith Clements, *Interview*

<sup>168</sup> Clements & Chandler, *op cit*, p. 12

<sup>169</sup> Paul Oestreicher, *Interview* (8.10.96)

<sup>170</sup> Barry Hill & Ian Traynor, “The Canon’s secret service,” *The Observer* (2 June 1996), p. 7

<sup>171</sup> Chandler, *Interview*

<sup>172</sup> Hastings, *Interview*

<sup>173</sup> Adrian Hastings, “Opting for Vatican II Plus,” *Journal of Theology for South Africa* (No. 41, December 1982), pp. 25 f

<sup>174</sup> *ibid*, p. 116



too opposes individualistic prophetic “egocentricity”, concentrating instead on the “prophetic culture” which produces him.<sup>175</sup> What makes authentic prophecy is also Clements’ concern.<sup>176</sup> He questions the assumption that the Church should always have “something to say”. Instead, the prophet must adopt the “role of learner, of disciple”.<sup>177</sup> Only when called by Yahweh and taught by Him in the faith-community, can the prophet speak.<sup>178</sup> Contrasting with Hastings’ declamatory style, Clements’ listening approach accents “prophetic discernment rather than prophetic deliverance.”<sup>179</sup>

Like Hastings, Clements observes that prophecy is often undertaken by theological conservatives. Clements claims for example that Argentinean theologians who criticised the Falklands-Malvinas war were “Reformed” Christians.<sup>180</sup> Nevertheless, while welcoming conservative theology’s emphasis on absolutes, Clements unlike Hastings, appreciates Cupitt’s attempt to locate God within universal “human experience”.<sup>181</sup> Both Clements and Hastings, however, regard theological conflict positively, making ideas more “sharply defined”.<sup>182</sup> In this “dialectical process” though, Hastings stresses the “consensus-challenging role of the prophet”,<sup>183</sup> whereas Clements emphasises consensus-building. The *Message* and *Manner* of Hastings are denunciatory, those of Clements dialogical.

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<sup>175</sup> Chandler, *Interview*

<sup>176</sup> Keith Clements, *Learning to Speak. The Church’s Voice in Public Affairs* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1995), p. 3

<sup>177</sup> *ibid*, p. xi

<sup>178</sup> *ibid*, p. 109

<sup>179</sup> Keith Clements, *Interview*

<sup>180</sup> Keith Clements, *Interview*

<sup>181</sup> Keith Clements, *Lovers of Discord. Twentieth Century Theological Controversies in England* (London: SPCK, 1988), p. 236

<sup>182</sup> *ibid*, p. 3

<sup>183</sup> Hastings, “Community, Consensus and Truth,” p. 24



## Ecclesiology

Hastings' and Clements' ecclesiological origins may explain their differences. Hastings reacts against a hierarchical magisterium, while Clements hails from the Baptist tradition of the Church Meeting, with its corporate decision-making and collective discernment of the mind of Christ. Another ecclesiological influence is the relation between Church and State. Although Chandler supports Anglican establishment as a representation of religion in Parliament,<sup>184</sup> Clements articulates Free Church suspicion of Anglicanism<sup>185</sup> and a preference for the world Church over the national Church.<sup>186</sup> His anti-Erastianism and ecumenism may explain his reluctance to denounce the Serbian Church.

Hastings, although Catholic and a critic of CCBI subservience to government, supports establishment, because ending it would entail a withdrawal from public responsibility.<sup>187</sup> This is because the decline of Christianity, humanism and socialism left no "public doctrine" with which to critique the "dominant hegemony of Mammon, of the marketplace."<sup>188</sup> Hastings feels that, although theology is not prophecy, public theology is needed to "provide the ground for prophecy".<sup>189</sup>

Clements suggests that Hastings' preference for public statements reveals his Catholic origins.<sup>190</sup> Although Hastings criticises Christendom his thinking remains formed by it. Despite his suspension by the Church and his rejection of the "earlier Roman ecclesiastical imperialism"<sup>191</sup> which identified Christianity and European interests, his

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<sup>184</sup> See Andrew Chandler, "Faith in the Nation? The Church of England in the 20 th Century," *History Today* (Vol. 47, No. 5, May 1997), p. 15

<sup>185</sup> See Clements, *A Patriotism for Today*, pp. 133 f

<sup>186</sup> *ibid*, p. 153

<sup>187</sup> See Adrian Hastings, "Church and State in a Pluralist Society," in *The Shaping of Prophecy*, pp. 113 ff

<sup>188</sup> Hastings, "Theology and Contemporary Reality," pp. 25 f

<sup>189</sup> *ibid*, p. 30

<sup>190</sup> Keith Clements, *Interview*

<sup>191</sup> Adrian Hastings, "Liturgy and Cultural Pluralism," in *The Theology of a Protestant Catholic*, p. 75



acceptance of religious pluralism ironically reduces Christianity to being (what he does not want) the “appropriate folk religion for the European West”.<sup>192</sup> Hastings’ radical prophecy is limited therefore by his ecclesiology, and Clements’ realist prophecy by his ecumenism. Their disagreement over *Message* is rooted in divergent ecclesial affiliations which form the socio-institutional location of the *Messenger*.

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<sup>192</sup> Hastings, “Pluralism: Theology and Religious Studies,” p. 38



## 5. INSTITUTIONAL CONFLICT

The Church can encourage or inhibit prophecy. Leaders try to define, manage, or sublimate prophecy into “constructive conflict”.<sup>193</sup> Although they may appreciate charismatic authority’s counterbalancing of traditional and bureaucratic authority<sup>194</sup> and its restoration of ecclesial “vitality,”<sup>195</sup> leaders also try to control it because, as Grace Jantzen notes, those who claim “direct access to God” challenge authority.<sup>196</sup>

### Pastor and Prophet - The Protestant Tension

In Protestant Churches, tension hinges on the relationship between pastor and prophet, to which Charismatic-Pentecostal Churches have a clear response - the assertion of pastoral over prophetic authority. Mike Bickle recognises both the insecurity a pastor feels when faced with someone claiming to speak God’s Word,<sup>197</sup> and the prophet’s fear of rejection.<sup>198</sup> Bickle insists, however, that Church leadership belongs to those who are “governmentally gifted” with “pastoral wisdom”.<sup>199</sup> This however is not a victory of traditional over charismatic authority, since pastors are also ‘charismatic’. In the 1990s, however, there is a “new breed of...prophetic pastors”, who combine prophecy and local Church leadership.<sup>200</sup> Bickle does not exclude this, but suggests that constantly challenging messages have a “demobilising effect” on congregations.<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> Paul Avis, *Authority, Leadership and Conflict in the Church* (London: Mowbray, 1992), p. x

<sup>194</sup> *ibid*, p. 68

<sup>195</sup> *ibid*, p. 120

<sup>196</sup> Grace Jantzen, *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 1

<sup>197</sup> See Bickle, *Growing in the Prophetic*, p. 154

<sup>198</sup> *ibid*, p. 163

<sup>199</sup> *ibid*, p. 162

<sup>200</sup> Larry Randolph, *User Friendly Prophecy* (Century City, CA: Cherith Publications, 1995), p. 132

<sup>201</sup> Bickle, *op cit*, p. 156



In addition there is the question of accountability, particularly for Joyner and Hamon who lead independent churches. Joyner distinguishes the roles of elder and prophet: the latter “directs” while the former “encourages” the Church.<sup>202</sup> Hamon however carefully cites Old Testament precedents to answer criticisms that prophets cannot govern.<sup>203</sup> His self-promotion to apostle illustrates also the subordination of prophets in Restorationism. In the Apostolic Church, although prophets chose apostles,<sup>204</sup> the latter ruled and judged prophecies.<sup>205</sup> This institutionalisation is reminiscent of the displacement of prophets by apostles in the nineteenth century Catholic Apostolic Church.<sup>206</sup> The Restorationist concept of “offices” also presents problems for Episcopal Churches. So, although Pytches discusses “church order” (i.e. liturgy and Canon Law),<sup>207</sup> he is silent about the tension between Anglican orders and Restoration offices.

Protestants with a Cultural-Political prophetic model stress the complementarity of pastoral and prophetic ministry. Although Brueggemann calls the prophet a “destabilising presence”,<sup>208</sup> he questions the “dichotomy of prophet and pastor”.<sup>209</sup> Prophetic ministry, for Brueggemann, includes not only political action, but incorporates liturgy for social healing and envisioning, and pastoral care involving confrontation with injustice.<sup>210</sup> As Ken Leech<sup>211</sup> and Ron Preston point out, this means pastoral care includes conflict, even within the Church.<sup>212</sup>

<sup>202</sup> Joyner, *The Prophetic Ministry*, pp. 191 f

<sup>203</sup> See Hamon, *Prophets and the Prophetic Movement*, pp. 196 ff

<sup>204</sup> See *The Apostolic Church*, p. 220

<sup>205</sup> *ibid*, p. 227 f

<sup>206</sup> See Tim Grass, “‘The Taming of the Prophets’: Bringing prophecy under control in the Catholic Apostolic Church,” *EPTA Bulletin* (Vol. XVI, 1996), p. 66

<sup>207</sup> Pytches, *Prophecy in the Local Church*, pp. 117 ff

<sup>208</sup> Walter Brueggemann, “The Prophet as a Destabilizing Presence,” in Walter Brueggemann, *A Social Reading of the Old Testament. Prophetic Approaches to Israel’s Communal Life* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1994), pp. 221 f

<sup>209</sup> *ibid*, p. 244

<sup>210</sup> *ibid*, p. 232

<sup>211</sup> See Leech, *Spirituality and Pastoral Care*, p. 66

<sup>212</sup> See Ronald H. Preston, *Church and Society in the Late Twentieth Century. The Economic and Political Task* (London: SCM, 1983), pp. 111 f



It is hard, however, for a “subsidised” state Church to be prophetic, because it is too acculturated and dependent to challenge society.<sup>213</sup> Such Churches will inevitably become a “state clientele”.<sup>214</sup> Bishop John Habgood concedes that the realism which ministry to political leaders requires has a “devastating effect on prophetic certainties”.<sup>215</sup> In Medhurst and Moyser’s words, “pastoral responsibility for power holders...must set limits to its prophetic role”.<sup>216</sup> Nevertheless, they believe that confusion about the clergy’s professional role,<sup>217</sup> their decline in status and lower economic rewards, might cause clergy to identify more with the poor. Then pastoral care may generate prophetic criticism.<sup>218</sup>

### **Hierarchy and Charism - The Catholic Dilemma**

The Catholic Church has particular problems in reconciling hierarchy and unity with prophetic criticism. Unsettlingly for conservatives, Yves Congar wrote that the Prophet goes “beyond the established structures and ideas” to develop “new ways” for the Church.<sup>219</sup> Karl Rahner, however, discussed the “charisma of office”; because with the Church’s dependence on Grace, hierarchical office cannot be “purely institutional”.<sup>220</sup> Nevertheless “non-institutional charismata”<sup>221</sup> challenge a “totalitarian view” which “equates office and charisma”.<sup>222</sup> Consequently “inevitable disagreement” arises from the “multiplicity of impulses” within the Church and unity can only be achieved through Christian love.<sup>223</sup>

<sup>213</sup> Robin Gill, *Interview* (6.11.97); See Robin Gill, *The Myth of the Empty Church* (London: SPCK, 1993), pp. 283 f

<sup>214</sup> Pierre Bordieu, “Remarks on the Economy of the Church,” in Pierre Bordieu, *Practical Reason* (Cambridge: Polity, 1998), p. 125

<sup>215</sup> John Habgood, *Church and Nation in a Secular Age* (London: DLT, 1983), p. 105

<sup>216</sup> Medhurst & Moyser, *op cit*

<sup>217</sup> *ibid*, p. 82

<sup>218</sup> *ibid*, p. 230

<sup>219</sup> Congar, *op cit*, p. 177

<sup>220</sup> Rahner, *The Spirit in the Church*, p. 37

<sup>221</sup> *ibid*, p. 40

<sup>222</sup> *ibid*, p. 42

<sup>223</sup> *ibid*, pp. 64 f



Peter Hocken criticises this conception of theologian as prophet.<sup>224</sup> Instead of challenging Rome, Catholic renewal sought its support, and leaders like Yocum stressed prophecy's submission to the Church's "teaching authority".<sup>225</sup> This submissiveness has led "self-styled committed Christians" to reject renewal.<sup>226</sup> Gutierrez furthermore called Church unity a "myth" because the "class struggle" existed within it.<sup>227</sup> Otto Maduro extrapolated this class analysis, claiming that the means of 'religious production'<sup>228</sup> were controlled by clerical representatives of the "dominant classes".<sup>229</sup> For Maduro, prophets were "religious agents involved in a strategy of conquest of religious power".<sup>230</sup> Despite "antiprophetic reactions," they promote "innovations" on the "periphery of ecclesiastical power".<sup>231</sup> Boff also criticised the "expropriation of the means of religious production", <sup>232</sup> arguing that the hierarchy should not interfere in the Spirit's prophetic role.<sup>233</sup> Rome's subsequent silencing of Boff illustrates the suppression of "prophetic dissent"<sup>234</sup> within the theologian's vocation.<sup>235</sup>

Some have therefore reconceptualised the nature of Church, emphasising the "popular church" of the base communities as the "prophetic church".<sup>236</sup> This does not imply an alternative to the institutional Church, however, but another "model" of the Church Universal.<sup>237</sup> Jon Sobrino though has adopted Protestantism's distinction between

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<sup>224</sup> Peter Hocken, *Interview* (21.4.97)

<sup>225</sup> Yocum, *op cit*, p. 113

<sup>226</sup> Christian Duquoc, "Editorial," in Duquoc & Floristan, *op cit*, p. viii

<sup>227</sup> Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, p. 277

<sup>228</sup> Otto Maduro, *Religion and Social Conflicts* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1982[1979]), pp. 35 ff

<sup>229</sup> *ibid*, p. 123

<sup>230</sup> *ibid*, p. 106

<sup>231</sup> *ibid*, pp. 107 ff

<sup>232</sup> Boff, *Church: Charism and Power*, p. 112

<sup>233</sup> *ibid*, p. 157

<sup>234</sup> Jose I. Gonzalez Faus, *Where the Spirit Breathes. Prophetic Dissent in the Church* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1989)

<sup>235</sup> See Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Instruction on the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana/ Slough: St. Paul Publications, 1990), pp. 28 ff

<sup>236</sup> Melendez, *op cit*, p. 3

<sup>237</sup> *ibid*, p. 7



Church and Kingdom,<sup>238</sup> rather than Catholicism's identification of them. This distinction enables Christians to prophetically critique the institution's sin while remaining faithful to the Gospel.<sup>239</sup> Sobrino therefore opposes conservative support for a "pluralism" which relativises demands for justice.<sup>240</sup> He recognises that divisions cut across "the hierarchy and the ordinary faithful".<sup>241</sup> Such tension between the Church's institutional and prophetic aspects is inevitable, because "historical unity" is not given but struggled for, until "eschatological unity" is realised.<sup>242</sup>

### **Prophetic Marginality - The Critical Paradox**

Cultural-Political prophets see themselves as marginal figures, identifying with and speaking for the marginalised. Ken Leech wrote that the desert Fathers were free to resist the culture because they withdrew to the desert. Today's equivalent, he suggests, is the inner city<sup>243</sup> Real prophets "do not seek status",<sup>244</sup> but minister among marginalised people.<sup>245</sup> Perhaps the measure of Jubilee Group's significance is not therefore its influence on policy (ecclesiastical or political), but its connections at the local community politics level?<sup>246</sup>

Wallis agrees that "things look clearer from the margins". He doesn't mean physical withdrawal. Rather, the Church is a "marginal community" when it lives by "values and commitments different from...the mainstream". For Wallis this means Christians have to "change our location" to where the poor live.<sup>247</sup> The Boffs demonstrate prophecy's dependence on "epistemology".<sup>248</sup> Clodovis writes that liberation theology

<sup>238</sup> See Sobrino, *The True Church and the Poor*, p. 210

<sup>239</sup> *ibid*, p. 212

<sup>240</sup> *ibid*, p. 198

<sup>241</sup> *ibid*, p. 197

<sup>242</sup> *ibid*, p. 217

<sup>243</sup> See Leech, *True God*, p. 154

<sup>244</sup> *ibid*, p. 202

<sup>245</sup> *ibid*, p. 247

<sup>246</sup> Rick Toeves, *Personal conversation*

<sup>247</sup> Wallis, *The Soul of Politics*, pp. 73 f

<sup>248</sup> See Clodovis Boff, "Epistemology and Method of the Theology of Liberation," in Ellacuria & Sobrino, *op cit*, pp. 57 ff



follows the “pretheological” commitment to the poor.<sup>249</sup> Leonardo adds that travelling “from the center to the margin” is the “witness of the prophet”<sup>250</sup> because the “periphery” gives the truest “point of view”.<sup>251</sup> As Ignacio Ellacuria noted, however, this requires more than geographical proximity to the poor. It requires a praxis of solidarity.<sup>252</sup>

Monasticism plays a particular role in marginality. Hastings wrote that celibacy and poverty free monks from social constraints to take a critical stance, although he recognised many had forgotten their prophetic calling.<sup>253</sup> Ken Leech quotes him,<sup>254</sup> and also Thomas Merton<sup>255</sup> and Daniel Berrigan’s understanding<sup>256</sup> of monasticism’s prophetic role, whereby the monk becomes someone who deliberately withdraws from society, to live a resistant lifestyle.<sup>257</sup> Diarmuid O’Murchu thinks their socially “liminal” status<sup>258</sup> enables monks to exercise a “prophetic mission” of “pioneering new possibilities”.<sup>259</sup> John Markey conceives religious communities as prophetic countercultural communities opposing North American materialism and individualism.<sup>260</sup>

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<sup>249</sup> *ibid*, p. 73

<sup>250</sup> Leonardo Boff, *Faith on the Edge. Faith and Marginalized Existence* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989), p. 40

<sup>251</sup> *ibid*, p. 73

<sup>252</sup> See Ignacio Ellacuria, “The True Social Place of the Church,” in John Hassett & Hugh Lacey (Eds.), *Towards a Society that serves its people: the Intellectual Constitution of El Salvador’s Murdered Jesuits* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1991), p. 284

<sup>253</sup> See Adrian Hastings, “Marginality,” in Adrian Hastings, *The Faces of God. Essays on Church and Society* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1975), pp. 18 ff

<sup>254</sup> See Leech, *Soul Friend*, p. 190

<sup>255</sup> Thomas Merton, *Contemplation in a World of Action* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1971), pp. 157 ff

<sup>256</sup> Daniel Berrigan, “Prophecy and Society,” in Daniel Berrigan, *The Bow in the Clouds* (London: Burns & Oates, 1961), pp. 78 ff

<sup>257</sup> See Kenneth Leech, “‘Not Survival but Prophecy’: The Future of Monasticism,” in Leech, *The Social God*, pp. 81 ff

<sup>258</sup> O’Murchu, *The Prophetic Horizon of Religious Life*, pp. 33 ff

<sup>259</sup> *ibid*, p. 142

<sup>260</sup> See John Markey, “Religious Communities’ Prophetic Role,” *Religious Life Review* (Vol. 29, July/August 1990), pp. 106 ff



Mary Grey asks whether a social group, such as gay Christians, is “prophetic” simply because it is marginal.<sup>261</sup> Others emphasise the “prophetic role of minorities”,<sup>262</sup> and Metropolitan Community Church pastor Larry Uhrig believes gay people “have a prophetic role providing a critique and an alternative to the heterosexual model of family”.<sup>263</sup> Marginality, however, has a negative side. The establishment may marginalise the prophet, as in Hastings’ experience of being “pushed out” of the Church.<sup>264</sup> Ken Leech discerns three strategies which the ecclesiastical establishment tries with prophets. It can marginalise them, expel them, or promote them.<sup>265</sup> In Leech’s case it was the first.

Many prophetic figures have good relations with authority, and often progress up the institutional hierarchy, while others are co-opted. But at a deeper level they share the systemic values of rationality, (social) utility, and efficiency. Hastings supports this when he observes that, to be received, prophets in a hierarchical Church need to be “a priest, even a bishop”.<sup>266</sup> Peter Berger argued that radicalisation of Old Testament Prophets did not originate in “social marginality”, but in “traditionally established institutions” from the content of the faith itself.<sup>267</sup> They therefore chose, or were forced, to move to the margins out of ideological conviction.

Edward Shils wrote that each society has a “central value system”,<sup>268</sup> which is not believed by everyone, but is held by the elite in the “central institutional system”.<sup>269</sup>

Peter Beyer argues that although liberation theology and ecological theology are

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<sup>261</sup> Grey, *Interview 2*

<sup>262</sup> Fraser & O’Brien, *op cit*, pp. 191, 197

<sup>263</sup> Larry Uhrig, *Sex Positive. A Gay Contribution to Sexual and Spiritual Union* (Boston, MASS: Alyson Publications Inc., 1986), pp. 70 f

<sup>264</sup> Hastings, “Marginality,” p. 18

<sup>265</sup> Leech, *Interview 1*

<sup>266</sup> Hastings, “Prophecy,” p. 61

<sup>267</sup> Berger, “Charisma and Religious Innovation: The Social Location of Israelite Prophecy,” p. 950

<sup>268</sup> Edward Shils, “Centre and Periphery,” in Worsley, *Modern Sociology*, p. 416

<sup>269</sup> *ibid*, p. 418



“antisystemic” in challenging capitalism, they are also “prosystemic” because their “liberal performance theology” uses the global system’s own “performance orientation”.<sup>270</sup> To use Lewis’s category, this is “main morality” prophecy, addressing issues which are functional for (global) society. Charismatic-Pentecostal prophecy, although pro-systemic in submitting to authority, is “peripheral” because it rejects rationalism for illuminism, and therefore does not address and is excluded from discussing social ethical problems.<sup>271</sup>

McGuire suggests for example that feminist groups constitute “nonofficial religions”.<sup>272</sup> But many Christian feminists occupy positions within the Church.<sup>273</sup> They have not taken the sectarian route, but remained “ecclesiolae in ecclesia”.<sup>274</sup> Cultural-Political and Creational-Pagan prophecy are, as James Beckford writes, “congruent with”, although not legitimating, the global capitalist system.<sup>275</sup> Globalisation makes “holistic imagery” attractive,<sup>276</sup> and an increasingly impersonal economic system renders impersonal Divine symbolism plausible.<sup>277</sup>

Justice and ecology movements therefore present significant attempts to “revitalize” world religions.<sup>278</sup> Although institutionally peripheral (e.g. Leech and Grey), they are ideologically central, frequently operating within academia (e.g. Wallis, West, Grey, Kelsey). As an “ideological sub-ensemble”<sup>279</sup> they express the prophetic aspect of global civil religion, addressing the problems of the system which its priestly

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<sup>270</sup> Peter Beyer, *Religion and Globalization* (London/Thousand Oaks, CA/New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1994), pp. 140 f

<sup>271</sup> Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion*, p. 32 ff

<sup>272</sup> McGuire, *op cit*, p. 111

<sup>273</sup> See Roberts, *op cit*, pp. 97 f

<sup>274</sup> McGuire, *op cit*, p. 147

<sup>275</sup> James A. Beckford, *Religion and Advanced Technological Society* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), p. 104

<sup>276</sup> *ibid*, p. 119

<sup>277</sup> See Thomas Robbins & Roland Robertson, “Studying Religion Today. Controversiality and Objectivity in the Sociology of Religion,” *Religion* (Vol. 21, 1991), p. 324

<sup>278</sup> Beckford, *op cit*, p. 120

<sup>279</sup> Poulantzas, *Political Power and Social Classes*, p. 223



representatives celebrate. Cultural-Political and Creational Pagan prophecy illustrate the “liberal-humanitarian” moderation of prophetic chiliasm,<sup>280</sup> whereby philosophical idealism replaces prophecy’s “visionary element”<sup>281</sup> and the “process of becoming” replaces the apocalyptic millennium.<sup>282</sup> Because they employ the ruling “political formula”<sup>283</sup> - rationalism and humanism, tolerance and inclusivity - they do not disrupt the social consensus.<sup>284</sup>

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<sup>280</sup> Mannheim, *op cit*, p. 197

<sup>281</sup> *ibid*, p. 199

<sup>282</sup> *ibid*, p. 202

<sup>283</sup> Mosca, *op cit*, p. 70

<sup>284</sup> cf. Poulantzas, *op cit*, p. 216



## 6. INVESTIGATING CONFLICT

### Which Criteria?

This thesis begs the question of how to discern between true and false prophecy? Each model suggests different criteria. For Conservative-Protestants it is easy, all prophetic claims are by definition false - either deceptive or mistaken. Some Biblical scholars, however, believe that criteria cannot be derived from Scripture for evaluating prophecy. In relation to Old Testament prophecy, Crenshaw wrote of a “fluid boundary” between true and false prophecy.<sup>285</sup> There were “no valid criteria” because each had exceptions.<sup>286</sup> Moreover Yahweh himself deceived the prophets.<sup>287</sup> David Aune takes a similar view of New Testament prophecy. He criticises David Hill’s book for being a theological rather than a phenomenological and historical account of early Church prophecy.<sup>288</sup> Aune regards the truth of prophecy as a matter of “perspective”. Scriptural criteria are merely the “labels” dictated by the ruling ideology.<sup>289</sup> According to this view point, as Eichrodt wrote, prophecy can only “appeal back to itself”. It cannot be “proved from any point outside itself, but carries its authentication within itself”.<sup>290</sup>

This existentialist decisionism, however, depends on empiricist historiography and methodological atheism. Wayne Grudem therefore attacks Aune, because of Aune’s own theological bias in excluding the Divine from historical analysis.<sup>291</sup> Overholt argues that the prophets performed a “role” which carried certain expectations, which implies

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<sup>285</sup> Crenshaw, *op cit*, p. 18

<sup>286</sup> *ibid*, pp. 47 ff

<sup>287</sup> *ibid*, pp. 76 f

<sup>288</sup> See Aune, *op cit*, p. 10

<sup>289</sup> *ibid*, p. 222

<sup>290</sup> Walter Eichrodt, *Ezekiel. A Commentary* (London: SCM, 1970), p. 157; quoted in Carroll, *When Prophecy Failed*, p. 241

<sup>291</sup> See Wayne Grudem, “‘Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean’ by David E. Aune,” *The Evangelical Quarterly* (Vol. LIX, No. 4, October 1987), pp. 351 ff



criteria for its performance.<sup>292</sup> De Vries also criticises the “widespread assumption in our day that there is no test”. Instead, he maintains, Old Testament prophets underwent “testing,” and offer themselves to “our tests today”.<sup>293</sup> Perhaps those who assert the impossibility of testing prophecy reflect a liberal theology defending human autonomy against Divine interference? Even granting that discernment depends on a standpoint,<sup>294</sup> does this necessarily entail abandoning it for agnosticism?

### Evaluating Prophecy

Charismatic-Pentecostal prophecy has clear criteria, summarised by Clifford Hill as follows: “fulfilment” - of predictions; “doctrine” - agreement with Church teaching and Scripture; “edification” - encouraging and building up the Church, even when critical; “the character and conduct of the prophet” - personal ethics, idolatry, and the “fruits” of the ministry.<sup>295</sup> This parallels Yocum’s criteria for testing “the life of the prophet,” the “message” and “the spirits”.<sup>296</sup> These in turn parallel the elements of *Messenger, Message and Manner*. •

Hill concedes that most “false prophecy” arises because of wishful thinking or a desire to please people.<sup>297</sup> However, he rejects the current distinction between “mild” and “serious” false prophecy.<sup>298</sup> Pytches<sup>299</sup> and Cooke<sup>300</sup> recommend the same criteria as Hill, but their desire to encourage beginners means they judge less severely. Joyner warns against “prematurely uprooting the tares” because “immature” prophets are not necessarily “false prophets”.<sup>301</sup> Bickle warns that “God offends the mind” by using

<sup>292</sup> Thomas W. Overholt, “Prophecy in History: The Social Reality of Intermediation,” in Philip R. Davies (Ed.), *The Prophets. A Sheffield Reader* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), pp. 67 f

<sup>293</sup> De Vries, *op cit*, pp. viii f

<sup>294</sup> See Robert P. Carroll, *From Chaos to Covenant. Uses of Prophecy in the Book of Jeremiah* (London: SCM, 1981), p. 177

<sup>295</sup> Hill, *Prophecy Past and Present*, pp. 237 ff

<sup>296</sup> Yocum, *op cit*, pp. 110 ff

<sup>297</sup> Hill, *op cit*, p. 286 f

<sup>298</sup> *ibid*, p. 289

<sup>299</sup> Pytches, *Prophecy in the Local Church*, pp. 95 ff

<sup>300</sup> Cooke, *Developing Your Prophetic Gifting*, pp. 146 ff

<sup>301</sup> Joyner, *The Prophetic Ministry*, pp. 33 f



“bizarre” people with strange methods or doctrines.<sup>302</sup> He also uses Grudem’s work to demonstrate that whereas Old Testament prophets communicated the exact words of God with 100% accuracy, New Testament prophets (like Agabus) did not.<sup>303</sup> Cooke therefore expresses a common distinction between deliberately deceptive “false prophecy”, impure or mixed “poor prophecy” and badly delivered “weak prophecy”.<sup>304</sup>

Bickle writes that weighing prophecy requires judgment “not methods”.<sup>305</sup> It is a question whether the prophet has a “passion for Jesus”.<sup>306</sup> The process, Cooke notes, also involves testing the spirits, the prophecy’s “source” - angelic and Divine, human, or demonic.<sup>307</sup> Among Catholics, such as Yocum,<sup>308</sup> the Ignatian tradition provides resources for discerning spirits.<sup>309</sup> Doctrinal testing however presents difficulties, when one asks, “whose doctrine”? For Yocum it means Catholic teaching,<sup>310</sup> but the Protestant Hill rejects Marian visions and Catholic prophecies.<sup>311</sup> Furthermore even where Joyner, for example, tries to avoid the tainting of prophecy by doctrinal distinctives, he is forced to admit it is possible.<sup>312</sup> In addition, there is the question of whether personal sin disqualifies someone from prophethood. Cooke asserts that a discrepancy between public ministry and private lifestyle will cause “spiritual failure”<sup>313</sup> and that ministerial success does not imply God’s approval of sin.<sup>314</sup> Joyner’s defence of Bob Jones, however, stated that sin did not “invalidate his [Jones’s] ministry”, because God works through people despite their sin.<sup>315</sup>

<sup>302</sup> Bickle, *Growing in the Prophetic*, p. 75

<sup>303</sup> *ibid*, p. 108

<sup>304</sup> Cooke, *ibid*, pp. 184 ff

<sup>305</sup> Bickle, “Guidelines for the Prophetic Ministry,” p. 20

<sup>306</sup> Mike Bickle, “Guidelines for the Prophetic Ministry,” p. 20

<sup>307</sup> *ibid*, p. 148

<sup>308</sup> See Yocum, *op cit*, p. 114

<sup>309</sup> See Faricy, *op cit*, pp. 65 ff

<sup>310</sup> See Yocum, *op cit*, p. 113

<sup>311</sup> See Hill, *And They Shall Prophecy...*, pp. 42 ff

<sup>312</sup> See Rick Joyner, *The Call* (Charlotte, NC: MorningStar Publications, 1999), p. 18

<sup>313</sup> Cooke, *ibid*, p. 103

<sup>314</sup> *ibid*, p. 122

<sup>315</sup> Joyner, “Answers To Commonly Asked Questions,” , p. 81



## Political Commitment

Where those using Cultural-Political and Creational-Pagan models criticise others, it tends to be ad hoc polemic against particular people. Rather than lists of criteria, they appeal simply to Old Testament prophecy's call for justice.<sup>316</sup> Ken Leech called Archbishop Coggan's *Call to the Nation* in 1976 "the voice of non-prophecy".<sup>317</sup> He feared that religious figures from the moralising conservative wing of the Church, like Coggan and Mary Whitehouse, could become "false prophets" providing ideological support for authoritarian political tendencies.<sup>318</sup> Other "false prophets" Leech identifies as apologists for the Tory government,<sup>319</sup> and those religious figures counselling "peace and calm" after the 1981 urban riots.<sup>320</sup> Later, Leech criticised the *Faith in the City* Report because it took a reformist rather than a "prophetic" stance.<sup>321</sup>

Cornel West distinguished between "prophetic religion" and "market religion" which is commodified and adopts a conservative political position.<sup>322</sup> He also criticises religious political activists, like Louis Farrakhan and Al Sharpton, who try to be prophetic. Far from being "prophetic" West calls them "messianic" power seekers, who only fill the vacuum in authentic black leadership.<sup>323</sup> Many black leaders have either denied race and sought assimilation, or affirmed race in a separatist way, rather than providing "race transcending prophetic leaders".<sup>324</sup> West's Pragmatism however, leads him to admit that if Christianity no longer generated "alternatives" and another tradition seemed "more acceptable", then he would abandon it.<sup>325</sup> His criteria therefore

<sup>316</sup> See Neil McIlwraith, "The Burden of Prophecy," in *The Burden of Prophecy*, p. 12

<sup>317</sup> Kenneth Leech, "Twenty Years of Jubilee: The Emergence of a Network," in Kenneth Leech (Ed.), *Who Will Sound the Trumpet? The Jubilee Group and the Future of the Left* (Croydon: Jubilee Group, 1994), p. 5

<sup>318</sup> Kenneth Leech, "Is There a New Religious Fascism?" in Leech, *The Social God*, p. 156, n.53

<sup>319</sup> Kenneth Leech, *The False Prophets of Reassurance* (London: Jubilee Paper, 1980), p. 4

<sup>320</sup> Leech, *After Scarman?*, p. 9

<sup>321</sup> Leech, *Struggle in Babylon*, p. 149

<sup>322</sup> West, "Beyond Eurocentrism and Multiculturalism," in *Prophetic Thought in Postmodern Times*, p. 23

<sup>323</sup> West, "The Future of Pragmatic Thought," *ibid*, pp. 72 f

<sup>324</sup> Cornel West, "The Crisis of Black Leadership," in *Race Matters*, pp. 39 ff

<sup>325</sup> Cornel West, "The Historicist Turn in the Philosophy of Religion," in *Keeping Faith*, p. 134



appear more dependent on ethnic loyalty than Christianity. Griffin wonders how West defends his values on pragmatic grounds.<sup>326</sup> Indeed it is unclear how ethnocentrism provides justification for civil rights rather than the Klu Klux Klan. Nevertheless West's pragmatic fallibilism enables him to admit that "all prophets, even the great ones" like Martin Luther King are "imperfect", for example in West's opinion with respect to "gender issues and homophobia."<sup>327</sup>

Liberation theology prioritises praxis in discernment. More than individualistic ethics, praxis refers to political commitment. True prophecy depends then not only on "orthodoxy" (right doctrine) but "orthopraxy" (right actions).<sup>328</sup> Liberation theology differs from scholastic approaches to the Old Testament both in terms of its commitment to praxis, and its attentiveness to the content of Biblical prophecy - although, unlike fundamentalists, they stress its social not individual dimensions.<sup>329</sup> True prophecy therefore derives from, and creates fresh political engagement alongside the poor. Henri Mottu wrote that truth and falsehood are only distinguished through "praxis", with false prophecy an ideological representation of group interest rather than God's universal view.<sup>330</sup> According to Juan Luis Segundo, orthopraxis is not the "application of revelation". It is a condition of revelation.<sup>331</sup> Christians only "know the truth" as it is lived in experience.<sup>332</sup>

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<sup>326</sup> See David Ray Griffin, "Liberation Theology and Postmodern theology: A Response to Cornel West," in David Ray Griffin, William A. Beardslee & Joe Holland (Eds.), *Varieties of Postmodern Theology* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989), p. 130

<sup>327</sup> West, "On the Future of the Black Church," in *Prophetic Reflections*, pp. 74 f

<sup>328</sup> Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, p. 10

<sup>329</sup> See Forrester, *op cit*, p. 84

<sup>330</sup> Henri Mottu, "Jeremiah vs. Hananiah. Ideology and Truth in Old Testament Prophecy," in Norman K. Gottwald & Richard A. Horsley (Eds.), *The Bible and Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis/London: SPCK, 1993), pp. 313 ff

<sup>331</sup> Juan Luis Segundo, "Revelation, Faith, Signs of the Times," in Ellacuria & Sobrino, *op cit*, p. 334

<sup>332</sup> *ibid*, p. 332



South Africans also suggest there is no “a priori criterion” for discernment.<sup>333</sup> Faced with “rival theological interpretations” believers must return to God’s Covenant.<sup>334</sup> True prophecy involves Divine inspiration and “relevant application”.<sup>335</sup> Prophecy is determined not merely by content, but by the “interaction between the prophet, his hearers, and the situation, between the truth and the specific moment in time”.<sup>336</sup> Rather than an “ahistorical, constant fact”, God’s Word is related to the “kairotic moment”<sup>337</sup> and can only be understood “contextually”.<sup>338</sup>

### Choosing Discernment

It appears then that discernment is relative to each prophetic model. Different models accent different factors and only recognise as prophetic those who fit their preconceptions. Consequently, testing prophecy seems trapped within the postmodern pluralistic relativism, in which truth is defined within communities and traditions. The problem is compounded by the tendency of religious language (especially prophecy) toward “hyperbole”.<sup>339</sup> Brueggemann similarly suggests that prophetic proclamation is “rhetoric”<sup>340</sup> designed to inspire ‘beyond the possible’.<sup>341</sup> Peter Hocken moreover observed that amongst Pentecostals, the significant test was not doctrine but “signs of the Spirit’s presence”.<sup>342</sup> Hence Pentecostal acceptance of “Oneness” Pentecostals. But then there seems little recourse except subjective fideism?

<sup>333</sup> P. J. J. S. Pils, “The role of the ‘Hour’ in True and False Prophecy,” in G. D. Cloete & D. J. Smit (Eds.), *A Moment of Truth. The Confession of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church 1982* (Grand Rapids, MICH: Eerdmans, 1984), p. 81

<sup>334</sup> *ibid*, p. 85

<sup>335</sup> *ibid*, pp. 82 f

<sup>336</sup> *ibid*, p. 87

<sup>337</sup> *ibid*, pp. 88 f

<sup>338</sup> *ibid*, p. 91

<sup>339</sup> Stephen H. Webb, *Blessed Excess. Religion and the Hyperbolic Imagination* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1993)

<sup>340</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *Cadences of Home. Preaching among Exiles* (Louisville, K: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), p. 67

<sup>341</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *The Creative Word. Canon as a Model for Biblical Education* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1982), p. 54

<sup>342</sup> Hocken, “The Significance and Potential of Pentecostalism,” p. 35



The difficulty in weighing prophecy is compounded by the necessarily subjective nature of prophecy. Objective revelation via external objects requires subjective reception of the revelation, but prophecy is wholly subjective, arising in the consciousness of the prophet and it is hard to evaluate the internal feeling of certainty that it brings. The question remains whether any external criteria can 'judge' the internal prophetic experience.

David Middlemiss suggests some formal criteria, like coherence and compatibility; using Ockham's Razor to arrive at the simplest solution by excluding possibilities.<sup>343</sup> He admits that each criterion is uncertain, but thinks a "cumulative argument" can be constructed to evaluate charismatic experience.<sup>344</sup> Catholic theologian Robert Murray, however, while recognising the political<sup>345</sup> and ecological implications of prophecy,<sup>346</sup> suggests substantive criteria which have similarities to Charismatic-Pentecostal norms. He cites "compatibility" with the Gospel, "basic ethics", "personal intimacy with God", "personal moral character", relation to the Church, and the fruits of prophetic ministry.<sup>347</sup> Murray's apparent congruence with Charismatic-Pentecostal criteria suggests that, while existentialists are correct in emphasising subjective choice and the risk of faith, these do not occur in a vacuum. Discernment occurs within a tradition or community. On the other hand, neither is discernment trapped within denominational relativism, but relates to the grand tradition of orthodox Christianity. Therefore, before discerning between true and false prophecies, it is important to construct an adequate model for prophecy as such.

<sup>343</sup> See David Middlemiss, *Interpreting Charismatic Experience* (London: SCM, 1996), p. 229

<sup>344</sup> *ibid*, p. 233

<sup>345</sup> See Robert Murray, "Prophecy, Politics and Priesthood," *The Month* (October 1987), pp. 354 ff

<sup>346</sup> See Robert Murray, *The Cosmic Covenant* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1992)

<sup>347</sup> Robert Murray, "Prophecy," in Alan Richardson & John Bowden (Eds.), *A New Dictionary of Christian Theology* (London: SCM, 1983), p. 475



## CHAPTER EIGHT

### CONCLUSION

#### 1. THE POLITICS OF PROPHECY

##### **Examining prophecy**

This chapter will move from a socio-political and theological critique of existing models to a theological construction of a more adequate model of prophecy. A summary evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses for each model is as follows: Conservative-Protestant prophecy emphasises truth, but has no concept of contemporary prophetic revelation; Charismatic-Pentecostal prophecy emphasises revelatory experience, but neglects politics and the intellect; Cultural-Political prophecy retains the political, but loses the revelatory element and risks abandoning specific Christian truth; Creational-Pagan prophecy embraces mystical revelation and emphasises ecology, but again sacrifices specific Christian truth content. As the chapter moves to suggest ingredients of a more adequate model, it will include aspects of each model studied in the thesis while critiquing other elements. This will be only a suggested outline and will not dictate specific prophecies or prophetic lines of action, although it contains implications for these.

The chapter will assume Max Turner's consensus view of the Biblical account of prophecy.<sup>1</sup> If his findings are correct, then cessationism is untenable, the Pauline guidelines for the use of prophecy are valid for today, and the "perfect" at which prophecy shall cease is not the completion of Scripture but the parousia.<sup>2</sup> The Conservative-Protestant model therefore cannot provide a workable prophetic model, except in general and metaphorical terms. Where they see cultural commentary as

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<sup>1</sup> See Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts*, pp. 185 ff

<sup>2</sup> *1 Corinthians 13.8-10*



“prophetic” it is equivalent to Protestant Cultural-Political prophecy. Where they even cautiously recognise spontaneous utterances, then it is a moderate Charismatic-Pentecostal model.

Charismatic-Pentecostal prophecy risks the danger of abuse and manipulation, as individuals and churches submit to prophets. Some safeguards have been introduced, for example vetting prophecies in advance. While this removes dangers, however, it also encourages routinisation, predictability, and the loss of charismatic danger and excitement. These sociological processes create the need for repeated revivals to regenerate the experience. Another characteristic of Charismatic-Pentecostal prophecy, which it shares with Conservative-Protestantism, is the privatisation of religion.

As Rauschenbusch commented, evangelical and charismatic Protestantism’s stress on individual salvation is hard to later convert into prophetic concern for society.<sup>3</sup> Charismatic individualism derives from the atomisation of contemporary society, and the middle class context of charismatic experience. Such class “accommodation” makes “prophetic judgment of congregations...almost impossible,”<sup>4</sup> because they will not tolerate political challenges to their lifestyle. Therefore if prophecy is contextual, prophets need to choose a context among the poor that encourages critical proclamation. Another cause of Charismatic-Pentecostal prophecy’s non-political *Message* is its anti-intellectual *Manner*. Prophetic revelation for them is a form of illuminism. Consequently, there is little social analysis, and even less political application. Even where Prophets make political statements, they are frequently naive, reactivist, non-reflective, and personalist. With the “restriction of the area” for prophecy’s scope to religious issues, Charismatic-Pentecostal prophecy is in Trevor

<sup>3</sup> See Rauschenbusch, *op cit*, p. 337

<sup>4</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology Volume III*, p. 180



Ling's words, "subprophetic."<sup>5</sup>

### Reason and Revelation

For prophecy to embrace social analysis its *Manner* of revelatory reception must involve intellect and reason. Although not specifically mentioning prophecy, Barth wrote that the Word of God is a "rational" event.<sup>6</sup> Tillich qualifies this by asserting that while revelational epistemology is rational,<sup>7</sup> this means an "ecstatic reason" experientially "grasped by an ultimate concern."<sup>8</sup> Barth, however, opposed Tillich's location of the Word in human experience. Although Barth avoided "absolutising intellect"<sup>9</sup> and was open to "occult possibilities" in human nature, he refused to locate revelation within "anthropological centres" like the "subconscious." Instead, God's Word comes to the "whole self-determining man."<sup>10</sup> As Ricoeur later wrote, "mytho-poetic... revelation"<sup>11</sup> involves the "grasping of combinatory possibilities" through "cognition, imagination, and feeling."<sup>12</sup> Revelation therefore is not dualistic. It is natural as well as supernatural, processual through creation as well as punctiliar through charismata.

Besides critiquing charismatic illuminism, revelation to the whole person also opposes the Creational-Pagan equation of revelation and prophecy with right brain processes. As Berdyaev wrote, "spirit" cannot be naturalistically reduced to "psyche." It has "objective" reality and is not merely the "subjective" aspect of nature.<sup>13</sup> Identifying the spiritual and the psychic repeats Descartes' materialist error of locating the soul in

<sup>5</sup> Trevor Ling, *Prophetic Religion* (London: Macmillan/New York: St. Martins Press, 1966), p. 162

<sup>6</sup> Barth, *Church Dogmatics I.1*, p. 135

<sup>7</sup> See Dorothy M. Emmet, "Epistemology and the Idea of Revelation," in Charles W. Kegley & Robert W. Bretall (Eds.), *The Theology of Paul Tillich* (New York: Macmillan, 1952), pp. 198 ff

<sup>8</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology Volume I*, p. 53

<sup>9</sup> Barth, *op cit*, p. 133

<sup>10</sup> *ibid*, p. 203 f

<sup>11</sup> Paul Ricoeur, "Hermeneutics: Restoration of Meaning or Reduction of Illusion?" in Paul Connerton (Ed.), *Critical Sociology* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), p. 203

<sup>12</sup> Paul Ricoeur, "The Metaphorical Process as Cognition, Imagination, and Feeling," in Sheldon Sacks (Ed.), *On Metaphor* (Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), pp. 141 ff

<sup>13</sup> Nicolas Berdyaev, *Spirit and Reality* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1939), pp. 1 f, 39



the pineal gland.<sup>14</sup> Barth therefore dismisses all attempts to ground God's Word immanently in human experience as "Christian Cartesianism."<sup>15</sup> Whatever the eventual resolution of the mind-body problem, what can currently be maintained is only some "connection" between religious experiences and certain brain states.<sup>16</sup>

The psychologisation of revelation and prophecy among Creational-Pagan, and increasingly Charismatic-Pentecostal writers, is a God of the gaps approach to prophecy, which confuses the distinction between primary and secondary causes. This distinction recognises secondary psychological, intellectual or emotional factors, while still recognising first order Divine activity within them. Psychological explanations are partial, and fail to portray the whole person in relation to Divine revelation. By dualistically excluding the left brain in a crude revisitation of faculty psychology, such theories restrict prophecy to certain personality types, leaving no place for Divine sovereignty in revelation. The experience of charismatic prophets like Hamon,<sup>17</sup> the intellectual prophetism of West, and the literary nature of Biblical prophecy<sup>18</sup> disprove this stereotype. Instead, right and left hemispheres apparently cooperate in processing respectively non-verbal and verbal<sup>19</sup> or symbolic and intellectual aspects<sup>20</sup> of prophetic experience.

### Social Critique

Cultural-Political and Creational-Pagan prophecy both highlight social critique. The social determinisms of prophecy, however, limit their critiques. Despite themselves they are as accommodated to culture as those they attack. A characteristic which these

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<sup>14</sup> See Spilka et al, *op cit*, P. 166

<sup>15</sup> Barth, *Church Dogmatics I.1*, p. 223

<sup>16</sup> Russell Stannard, *Doing Away with God?* (London: Marshall Pickering, 1993), p. 83

<sup>17</sup> See Hamon, *Prophets and the Prophetic Movement*, pp. 189 ff

<sup>18</sup> See Lindblom, *op cit*, pp. 141 ff

<sup>19</sup> See A. J. Simpson, "Hemispheric Differences in Cognitive Processes: Evidence from Experimental Psychology," in Kevin Connolly (Ed.), *Psychology Survey No. 2* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1979), p. 189

<sup>20</sup> See Fenwick, "Some Aspects of the Physiology of the Mystic Experience," p. 220



models share is the tendency to “instrumentalize religion.”<sup>21</sup> Even with a conflict model of society, disharmony is regarded as something religion must heal. These prophetic models therefore constitute the prophetic modes of particular civil religions. As Barth wrote, however, “Church proclamation” must not be judged by its ability to “maintain or perhaps even to overthrow this or that form of society or economy.”<sup>22</sup> In practice prophetic criticism may be “functional and/or dysfunctional,” since the prophet’s “extremism and unwillingness to compromise” may actually inhibit “constructive and realistic change.”<sup>23</sup> Conservatives typically find prophetic disruption distasteful.<sup>24</sup> Moreover the increasing institutional differentiation of western society prohibits the society-wide revitalisation for which Christians hanker. With the replacement of the Christian hegemonic plausibility structure by “structural pluralism,” and the declining deference toward religious leaders, social interventions by Church hierarchies will, Andrew Walker writes, “not be understood as prophecy, but interpreted as idiocy.”<sup>25</sup>

If Cultural-Political and Creational-Pagan prophetic practitioners thus misunderstand their context so badly that it threatens their prophesying, perhaps there is something wrong with their approach? Integral to each is the use of philosophical mediation, rather than revelatory inspiration. Prophecy follows analysis, using the frameworks of Marx, Jung, Science, or Pragmatism. This theoretical dependency leads some into the modernist fallacy of neutral observation, others into postmodern relativism. Admittedly liberation theology’s hermeneutic of suspicion highlights the impossibility of socio-political neutrality, but it does not equally recognise the impossibility of religious objectivity. Theories shape answers, however. It is impossible to begin with

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<sup>21</sup> Lars Johansson, “New Age - A Synthesis of the Premodern, Modern and Postmodern,” in Phillip Sampson, Vinay Samuel & Chris Sugden (Eds.), *Faith and Modernity* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 1994) p. 224

<sup>22</sup> Barth, *Church Dogmatics I.1*, p. 72

<sup>23</sup> Roberts, *op cit*, p. 60

<sup>24</sup> e.g. Feuer, *op cit*, pp. 181 ff

<sup>25</sup> Andrew Walker, *Telling the Story. Gospel, Mission and Culture* (London: SPCK, 1996), p. 119



Godless philosophy and then introduce a Godly gloss. Instead of a *Deus ex machina*, prophecy must begin analysis with God.

### Constantinianism

Does the *Manner* of Christian prophecy require Christian social theory? John Milbank criticises Christians' willingness to "borrow" secular social theory. He asserts that theology itself is a "social science," founded not idealistically but on a "distinguishable Christian mode of action, a definite practice" in the Church.<sup>26</sup> According to Milbank, only this communal foundation enables us to "criticize" society.<sup>27</sup> This resonates with Herbert Richardson's contention that the alternative to civil religion is the Church - not merely individual belief but the institution of the ecclesia.<sup>28</sup> Both views, however, reflect the same attitude as civil religion. Each articulates the Constantinian Christendom project. It is no accident that, Milbank's hero, Augustine betrayed his vision of the harmonious City of God by supporting "pedagogical coercion" against heretics.<sup>29</sup> It was actually integral to Augustine's Constantinianism. Although Milbank recognises that Christian ethics are for Christians,<sup>30</sup> his thinking too is moulded by allegiance to Catholic Christendom ideals.

The thesis has frequently noted the influence of Church background on prophecy, but underlying each instance is the Constantinian heritage. Constantinianism continues to recur; coercive theocracy is only one example.<sup>31</sup> Central is the belief that Christians carry responsibility for managing society. From Constantine onwards this has involved a rapprochement with paganism, running counter to the Mosaic "critical-

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<sup>26</sup> Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, p. 380

<sup>27</sup> *ibid*, p. 388

<sup>28</sup> See Herbert Richardson, "Civil Religion in Theological Perspective," in Jones & Richey, *op cit*, p. 182

<sup>29</sup> Milbank, *ibid*, p. 419

<sup>30</sup> *ibid*, p. 399

<sup>31</sup> See John Howard Yoder, "The Constantinian Sources of Western Social Ethics," in Yoder, *The Priestly Kingdom*, pp. 135 ff



prophetic stance.”<sup>32</sup> Instead, Christendom’s vision is of an “all-englobing unchallenged truth system,”<sup>33</sup> if necessary a pluralistic one. Society is conceived as a unitive whole, and the Church’s pastoral responsibility for leaders making ‘realistic’ decisions and the masses who lack Christian commitment, produces an ethics for ‘everyman.’ If injunctions against violence or sexual immorality seem unrealistic, then the Church derives norms from outside the Gospel. But what room is there in “public religion” for prophetic critique?<sup>34</sup> Would Jeremiah have formed a multifaith alliance with the Queen of heaven’s worshippers to fight the Babylonians and redress injustice?<sup>35</sup>

Constantinianism, manifested in civil religion, erastianism, and theocracy, is compatible with liberalism and pluralism. Polytheistic tolerance is more conducive to social harmony than intolerant monotheism.<sup>36</sup> This is clear from the example of liberation theology. As Cox writes, liberation theology appeals to “the consensus of the Catholic culture.”<sup>37</sup> This is because according to Constantinian logic each baptised person is a Christian and can be addressed in terms of ethics. Hence a problem is posed when liberation theology travels to non-western societies. A new consensus, accepting pluralism, must be accepted, for example in Asia. The resultant “interreligious alliance” therefore is integrated pragmatically and instrumentally as “the struggle for the poor.”<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> John Howard Yoder, “The Disavowal of Constantine: An Alternative Perspective on Interfaith Dialogue,” in John Howard Yoder, *Royal Priesthood. Essays Ecclesiological and Ecumenical* (Grand Rapids, MICH: Eerdmans, 1994), p. 246

<sup>33</sup> *ibid*, p. 257

<sup>34</sup> See Richard Russell, “Christian Faith & Public Religion,” *Third Way* (Vol. 7, No. 8, September 1984), p. 12

<sup>35</sup> See *Jeremiah* 7.16-19; 44.1.30

<sup>36</sup> See David Hume, *The Natural History of Religion and Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976), pp. 58 ff

<sup>37</sup> Cox, *Religion in the Secular City*, p. 155

<sup>38</sup> *ibid*, p. 230



This function of social cement, however, might not need to be performed by religion at all. As James Beckford suggests this may be a historically contingent connection. Certainly, there are many contemporary societies not integrated by homogeneous religious belief.<sup>39</sup> But far from the public square being naked, it is a “fortress of commerce.”<sup>40</sup> Capitalism replaces the religious veil covering exploitation with a naked cash “nexus.”<sup>41</sup> The unity of the market therefore underlies surface pluralism, which is why postmodernist concentration on ‘surface’ cannot render any social critique. As Rome tolerated a religious poly-theism subject to Caesar, capitalism tolerates a secular poly-idolatry subject to Mammon. Postmodernist pluralism is an expression of the world economy’s own diversity.<sup>42</sup> Its prophetic expression in the Creational-Pagan model is the prophetic mode of a globalised civil religion. In accepting the reality-definitions of global culture it is intellectually subject to the ideological hegemony of Capital.<sup>43</sup>

### Radical Reformation

If Christian prophecy requires Christian social theory, it must derive from a distinct material practice if it is to avoid charges of idealism. One resource is the Anabaptist Radical Reformation tradition. Like Milbank, John Yoder questions the dependence of Christian social ethics on the “secular common sense of the ‘objective’ social science disciplines”<sup>44</sup> and, like Richardson, Yoder constructs the Church as the alternative to civil religion. Yoder’s specific ecclesiastical form, however, is the radical Free Church model,<sup>45</sup> which means foregoing the attempt to Christianise pagan society. Against this, both evangelicals (including Charismatic-Pentecostal) and ecumenists (embracing

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<sup>39</sup> See Beckford, *op cit*, p. 110

<sup>40</sup> Clapp, *op cit*, p. 21

<sup>41</sup> Karl Marx & Frederick Engels, “Manifesto of the Communist Party,” in Karl Marx & Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1968), p. 38

<sup>42</sup> See Smart, *Postmodernity*, p. 131

<sup>43</sup> See Antonio Gramsci, *The Modern Prince and Other Writings* (New York: International Publishers, 1978), p. 186

<sup>44</sup> John Howard Yoder, “A Critique of North American Evangelical Ethics,” *Transformation* (Vol. 2, No. 1, January/March 1985), p. 31

<sup>45</sup> See John Howard Yoder, “Civil Religion in America,” in *The Priestly Kingdom*, p. 188



Cultural-Political and Creational-Pagan prophecy) aim at Christianisation, achieved by the former through converting individuals and the latter through political action.<sup>46</sup>

As Rousseau realised, however, Christianity makes a bad civil religion,<sup>47</sup> because it introduces another “Kingdom” alongside the State.<sup>48</sup> Indeed prophetic criticism requires a version of “Two-Kingdoms Theology.”<sup>49</sup> This is not the Lutheran doctrine but the empirical existence of an alternative community. The context for prophetic critique is the Church. As Leech recognised, prophets are formed by a community nourished by tradition.<sup>50</sup> But that tradition’s values must be genuinely countercultural. Sociologically, the sectarian community founded on distinct beliefs and in opposition to worldly society, is the structure most able to generate “contra-class” values.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, quoting Brueggemann, the task of prophecy includes “forming and reforming an alternative community” through nurturing an alternative consciousness to the dominant ideology.<sup>52</sup>

For Alan Kreider, prophecy is expressed through corporate “speech-acts” of radical witness, rather than words alone.<sup>53</sup> Although he recognises the need for social integration, this is not the Church’s job. Instead God’s preserving activity comes under the category of “Common Grace.”<sup>54</sup> The Church therefore looks back to Scripture’s “dissident” prophetic tradition.<sup>55</sup> This means abandoning the prophetic

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<sup>46</sup> See John Howard Yoder, *Concepts of Evangelism in Current Debate* (Unpublished Paper) (Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Goshen: Student Discussion Forum, 13 February 1967)

<sup>47</sup> See Jean Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract and Discourses* (London: J. M. Dent & sons Ltd., 1973), p. 272

<sup>48</sup> *ibid*, p. 270

<sup>49</sup> Gerald W. Schlabach, “Beyond Two-/vs. One-Kingdom Theology: Abrahamic Community as a Mennonite Paradigm for Christian Engagement in Society,” *The Conrad Grebel Review* (Vol. 11, No. 3, Fall 1993), pp. 189 ff

<sup>50</sup> See Leech, *The Eye of the Storm*, p. 214

<sup>51</sup> Schoenfeld, “Militant and submissive religions: class, religion and ideology,” pp. 133 f

<sup>52</sup> Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, p. 14

<sup>53</sup> Alan Kreider, *Interview* (11.12.96)

<sup>54</sup> See Cornelius Van Til, *Common Grace and The Gospel* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1972)

<sup>55</sup> Alan Kreider, *Journey Towards Holiness* (Basingstoke: Marsall Morgan & Scott, 1986), pp. 96 ff



“revitalisation” of society on theological grounds of principle as well as sociological grounds of pluralism. In contemporary large-scale pluralistic societies the enterprise is necessarily “abortive” and not merely in some cases as Wallace thought.<sup>56</sup> Consequently, Yoder wrote, Christians may make a “tactical alliance” with pluralism and relativism when prophetically critiquing rulers, but must maintain particularity concerning Jesus.<sup>57</sup> The Church’s “prophetic responsibility for civic ethics,” however, does not mean imposing Christian standards on unbelievers. Instead it appeals to norms of justice, although it does this not from any “belief in a universal, innate moral sense, but because of its faith in the Lord.”<sup>58</sup> Indeed the specific grounding of prophetic appeals in “Covenant” provides substantive criteria for Anabaptist discernment.<sup>59</sup>

This poses problems for those with political rather than prophetic vocations. The prophet’s “black and white denunciations” hinder an appreciation of the “ambiguities and ambivalences” of politics.<sup>60</sup> Politicians, Lord Hailsham wrote, deal with the “art of the possible,” accepting a morality “lower than that prescribed by the Civitas Dei.”<sup>61</sup> This dilemma faces all politicians who want, as Labour MP Stephen Timms said, to be “effective.”<sup>62</sup> Yoder though, questions what “responsibility for the social” means.<sup>63</sup> Far from being anti-political, Jesus overturned the conventional definition of politics.<sup>64</sup> Although conservative evangelicals, like Earle Ellis, think that in the “Post-Constantinian period” political prophecy is dangerous and irrelevant,<sup>65</sup> it may be that non-violence is precisely relevant as “prophetic protest” against politics defined as

<sup>56</sup> Wallace, “Revitalization Movements,” p. 429

<sup>57</sup> See John Howard Yoder, “But We Do See Jesus,” in *The Priestly Kingdom*, p. 62

<sup>58</sup> John Howard Yoder, “The Otherness of the Church,” in *Royal Priesthood*, p. 56

<sup>59</sup> See E. A. Martens, *Plot and Purpose in the Old Testament* (Leicester: IVP, 1981), pp. 151 ff

<sup>60</sup> Preston, *op cit*, p. 107

<sup>61</sup> Lord Hailsham, “The Two Kingdoms,” in Michael Alison & David L. Edwards (Eds.), *Christianity and Conservatism* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1990), p. 23

<sup>62</sup> Stephen Timms, *Interview* (5.2.97)

<sup>63</sup> John Howard Yoder, *The Original Revolution: Essays in Christian Pacifism* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1971), p. 81

<sup>64</sup> See John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MICH: Eerdmans, 1972), pp. 112 f

<sup>65</sup> E. Earle Ellis, “Prophecy in the New Testament - and Today,” in Panagopoulos, *op cit*, p. 55 f



the deployment of force.<sup>66</sup> But Constantinianism reduces such Christian lifestyle to the “prophetic calling” of the few, not a requirement of discipleship.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> John Howard Yoder, *Nevertheless. The Varieties and Shortcomings of Religious Pacifism* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1971), pp. 51 ff

<sup>67</sup> John Howard Yoder, “Peace without Eschatology?” in *Royal Priesthood*, p. 163



## 2. THE WEAKNESS OF PROPHECY

### Anabaptist Failures

In practice, Free Church polity often legitimates oppressive structures. For example, Baptist accommodation to individualistic middle class culture excludes political activism from discipleship. Although sects are structurally more able to prophesy, their class captivity makes it unlikely.<sup>68</sup> Therefore it is important to question not only the formal identification of Church and state but the informal congruence of values and material practices between society and sect. Prophecy will be just as inhibited where the Church is structurally 'free' but actually determined by societal norms, as it is in erastianism. Wherever ethical norms are taken from the fallen culture, as in Richard Niebuhr's analysis,<sup>69</sup> then the "prophetic impact of God speaking into history" is rendered irrelevant. Although Anabaptism possesses prophetic resources, the sickness of the tradition inhibits its potential in three ways:

#### 1. Political 'realism':

'Realism' threatens all activists. The Mennonite Central Committee in Washington, set up in 1968, attempts to bring prophetic pressure on government policy-making.<sup>70</sup> Tension exists, however, between "the 'churchly' mode of lobbying" and the 'sectarian' prophetic stance of the "outsider".<sup>71</sup> The former risks "sacrificing ethical prophecy" for the sake of effectiveness,<sup>72</sup> the latter practices "cheap prophecy" making absolute pronouncements without practical involvement.<sup>73</sup> Meanwhile Martin Marty wonders whether their politicisation might make Mennonites lose the unique prophetic contribution of their communal lifestyle.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Gill, *Interview*

<sup>69</sup> See H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (London: Faber & Faber, 1952)

<sup>70</sup> See Keith Grabber Miller, *Wise as Serpents, Innocent as Doves. American Mennonites engage Washington* (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1996), pp. 92 ff

<sup>71</sup> *ibid*, p. 94

<sup>72</sup> *ibid*, p. 174

<sup>73</sup> *ibid*, p. 213 n. 5

<sup>74</sup> See Martin E. Marty, "On 'Being Prophetic'," *The Christian Century* (14 May 1980), p. 559



## 2. *Cultural accommodation:*

Community existence itself poses problems for prophecy. Tactical withdrawal before persecution can become a principle of withdrawal, which may then produce monocultural ethnic churches. Frequently, the authority structures needed for self-protection have produced “a new, albeit miniature, Christendom”.<sup>75</sup> Occasionally, this creates an abuse of power.<sup>76</sup> Today however, this communal foundation is itself threatened, as Mennonites accommodate their lifestyle to liberal America,<sup>77</sup> and denominational forms succumb to “individualism and anti-institutionalism.”<sup>78</sup> In practice the two Kingdoms are becoming “increasingly invisible and subjective - an anthropological dualism rather than an ecclesiological dualism”.<sup>79</sup> Will their prophetic critique survive this crisis in its plausibility structure? In Britain moreover, there is no institutional base. The single small Mennonite congregation and the Anabaptist Network<sup>80</sup> only attract isolated individuals from mainline denominations. There is no prophecy-fostering alternative community.

## 3. *Spiritual impoverishment:*

The historical development of spirituality within Anabaptism has stunted prophetic consciousness. Early Anabaptists distinguished “the inner and outer word”, the Spirit’s illumination and Scripture itself.<sup>81</sup> In addition, spiritualistic groups encouraged “prophetic dreams and visions”. Reacting against persecution and the disaster of Munster, however, they adopted a conservative legalistic Biblicism, which supplanted

<sup>75</sup> Paul Peachey, “The ‘Free Church’: A Time Whose Idea Has Not Come,” in Walter Kaasen (Ed.), *Anabaptism Revisited* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1992), p. 180

<sup>76</sup> See Lawrence Osborn & Andrew Walker, *Harmful Religion. An Exploration of Religious Abuse* (London:SPCK, 1997)

<sup>77</sup> See Ronald Sider, “Evangelicalism and the Mennonite Tradition,” in C. Norman Kraus (Ed.), *Evangelicalism and Anabaptism* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1979), p. 165

<sup>78</sup> C. Norman Kraus, “An Anabaptist Spirituality for the Twenty-first Century,” *The Conrad Grebel Review* (Vol. 13, No. 1, Winter 1995), p. 25

<sup>79</sup> C. Arnold Snyder, *Anabaptist History and Theology. An Introduction* (Kitchener, Ontario: Pandora Press, 1995), p. 387

<sup>80</sup> See Stuart Murray, “Editorial,” *Anabaptism Today* (No. 1, November 1992), pp. 2 f

<sup>81</sup> Wilhelm Wiswedel, “The Inner and Outer Word,” in H. Wayne Pipkin (Ed.), *Essays in Anabaptist Theology* (Elkhart, I: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 1994), pp. 51 ff



“spiritualistic and prophetic readings of Scripture”.<sup>82</sup> Today, controversy over spiritual gifts<sup>83</sup> may unite conservative traditionalists and radical activists against charismatics. Although the “Anabaptist vision” recovered its social dimension, Stephen Dintaman has criticised it for preaching a “prepentecostal ethics” addressed to the personally secure, but lacking the spiritual power needed for personal transformation.<sup>84</sup> A recent study of Anabaptist spirituality’s distinctives referred to a “Christocentric spirituality of faithful praxis”, but marginalised the Spirit Himself.<sup>85</sup> Although Menno Simon’s Christological hermeneutic corrected “unbridled prophetic spiritualism,”<sup>86</sup> Anabaptism retains a weak pneumatology. Perhaps recovering its charismatic origins may renew Anabaptism’s prophetic potential?

### **Preventing Prophecy?**

The thesis has noted the failure and closure of each prophetic example, including Anabaptism, when faced with the determinisms of class, capitalism and commodification, and the realities of postmodernity, pluralism and politics. This cultural captivity raises the question whether it is possible to prophesy in contemporary culture. The question is not: will prophecy be effective in changing society? The prophet, as Jacques Ellul writes, “does not bring any solution or engage in any action”, but simply declares the Word of God to the situation.<sup>87</sup> Rather, in today’s media-manipulated society is it any longer possible to receive prophecy?

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<sup>82</sup> Snyder, *op cit*, pp. 368 f

<sup>83</sup> See J. Howard Kauffman, “Mennonite Charismatics: Are they Any different?” *The Mennonite Quarterly* (Vol. LXX, No. 4, October 1996), pp. 449 ff

<sup>84</sup> Stephen F. Dintaman, “The Spiritual Poverty of the Anabaptist Vision,” *The Conrad Grebel Review* (Vol. 10, No. 2, Spring 1992), p. 205

<sup>85</sup> Kraus, “An Anabaptist Spirituality for the Twenty-first Century,” p. 32

<sup>86</sup> Snyder, *op cit*, p. 214

<sup>87</sup> Jacques Ellul, *The Politics of God and the Politics of Man* (Grand Rapids, MICH: Eerdmans, 1972), p. 50



Critical theory has posited that in modern culture, “the capacity to think that things might be otherwise, or even to feel such a need, has been repressed”.<sup>88</sup> Under “repressive tolerance”, Herbert Marcuse wrote, the totally administered society and the tyranny of the majority, through publicity and propaganda, ensure that independent thought cannot challenge the system.<sup>89</sup> A “harmonious pluralism” of ideas<sup>90</sup> ensures that “non-operational” theories are neutralised, even while being disseminated through the media.<sup>91</sup>

Tillich suggested that objective reason is replaced by subjective and technical reason adapted to problem-solving.<sup>92</sup> Like Tillich, Max Horkheimer wrote that in contemporary society religion becomes “pragmatistic”, valued for its ideologically-defined social usefulness<sup>93</sup> and that with religion’s decline comes the end of “objective truth”.<sup>94</sup> But with the collapse of an independent viewpoint, there is no discourse not accommodated “towards dominant patterns of thought”.<sup>95</sup> The masses are unable to “hear the unheard-of with their own ears, to touch the unapprehended with their own hands - the new form of delusion which deposes every conquered mythic form”.<sup>96</sup> Without vibrant religion, the “longing for something other” cannot arise in the total administered society.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Joan Alway, *Critical Theory and Political Possibilities. Conceptions of Emancipatory Politics in the Works of Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, and Habermas* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995), p. 42

<sup>89</sup> See Herbert Marcuse, “Repressive Tolerance,” in Connerton, *op cit*, pp. 301 ff

<sup>90</sup> Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man* (London: Abacus, 1972), p. 61

<sup>91</sup> *ibid*, p. 26

<sup>92</sup> See Tillich, *Systematic Theology Volume I*, pp. 72 ff

<sup>93</sup> Max Horkheimer, *Eclipse of Reason* (New York: Continuum, 1996), p. 185

<sup>94</sup> *ibid*, p. 17

<sup>95</sup> Theodor Adorno & Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (London: Verso, 1979), p. xii

<sup>96</sup> *ibid*, p. 36

<sup>97</sup> Max Horkheimer, *Critique of Instrumental Reason* (New York: Seabury, 1974), p. 50



Guy Debord's concept of the "Spectacle" extended this depiction of closure within capitalism.<sup>98</sup> Its global power means that even critical "debate" is organised by the Spectacle.<sup>99</sup> There is "no room for any reply".<sup>100</sup> The pessimistic lack of future orientation of subsequent postmodernists, has been criticised as an apology for global capitalism,<sup>101</sup> but like critical theory, they accurately portray the sense of closure. Baudrillard depicts the rejection of "transcendence" by the masses, who absorb all (prophetic) messages beamed at them like a "gigantic blackhole".<sup>102</sup> Because the "precession of simulacra" has excised any objective external reality in the light of which society may be critiqued,<sup>103</sup> what remains is administration, in which "instead of a right to prophecy, we have the right of *registration*".<sup>104</sup>

Any appeal to "tradition" (whether Catholic, Celtic or ethnic) as a ground for prophetic critique is also flawed. This palaeontological "revival of vanished - or vanishing forms" is precisely what characterises postmodernity. But their resurrection is never "as they were".<sup>105</sup> Traditionalism differs from tradition, and changes it. Self-conscious reference transforms tradition's meaning from a context where it is unchallenged. Increasingly reified and transformed into hyperreality by their revival under late capitalism, religio-cultural artifacts and ideas form "a more abstract and imagistic mode of commodity production".<sup>106</sup> The optimism of Charismatic-Pentecostal and Creational-Pagan prophecy is socio-politically ill-informed. Although the socio-political awareness of Cultural-Political prophecy in general and

<sup>98</sup> Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle* (New York: Zone Books, 1994[1967])

<sup>99</sup> Guy Debord, *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle* (London/New York: Verso, 1996[1988]), p. 6

<sup>100</sup> *ibid*, p. 29

<sup>101</sup> See Ben Agger, *The Discourse of Domination. From the Frankfurt School to Postmodernism* (Evanston, ILL: Northwestern University Press, 1992), pp. 285 f

<sup>102</sup> Jean Baudrillard, *In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities* (New York: Semiotext(e) Foreign Agents Series, 1983), pp. 8 f

<sup>103</sup> Jean Baudrillard, *Simulations* (New York: Semiotext(e) Foreign Agents Series, 1983), p. 3

<sup>104</sup> *ibid*, p. 111

<sup>105</sup> Baudrillard, *The illusion of the End*, p. 117

<sup>106</sup> Steven Best, "The Commodification of Reality and the Reality of Commodification: Baudrillard, Debord, and Postmodern Theory," in Douglas Kellner (Ed.), *Baudrillard: A Critical Reader* (Oxford/Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1994), p. 54



Charismatic-Pentecostal and Creational-Pagan prophecy in the case of Clifford Hill and Mary Grey produces pessimism, only West and Hastings question the very possibility of prophecy in contemporary society. West wonders whether material prosperity militates against the risk-taking that prophecy demands,<sup>107</sup> and Hastings asks if tolerance “muffles prophecy”.<sup>108</sup>

### Postmodern Prophecy

The sense of powerlessness among critical and postmodern theorists may be due to isolation from active social movements. Adorno struggled with this,<sup>109</sup> and Baudrillard has been criticised for it.<sup>110</sup> Jurgen Habermas however sees hope for social change in “new social movements”.<sup>111</sup> These represent protests against late capitalism’s colonisation of the “lifeworld”. They include religious fundamentalism, as well as environmentalist and feminist movements; although Habermas’s rationalism causes him to arbitrarily identify the former as merely “resistant” and the latter as “progressive”. What it shows however, is the importance of social expression. More than rootedness in abstract tradition, prophets need to belong to an organic community, in this case the Church. The hermeneutic of reflection within the ecclesia is the cultural context of prophetic inspiration.

Furthermore, maybe only prophecy can penetrate postmodernity’s total administered society. Baudrillard betrays traces of a “recovery of the prophetic voice”.<sup>112</sup> His “cultural metaphysics” communicates a “specific type of prophetic impulse” -

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<sup>107</sup> See Cornel West, “The Black Underclass and Black Philosophers,” in *Prophetic thought in Postmodern Times*, p. 157

<sup>108</sup> Hastings, “Prophecy,” p. 63

<sup>109</sup> See Adorno, “Resignation,” *Telos* (No. 35, Spring 1978), pp. 165ff

<sup>110</sup> See Best, *op cit*, pp. 61 f

<sup>111</sup> Jurgen Habermas, “New Social Movements,” *Telos* (No. 49, Fall 1981), pp. 33 ff

<sup>112</sup> Andrew Wernick, “Post-Marx: Theological themes in Baudrillard’s America,” in Philippa Berry & Andrew Wernick (Eds.), *Shadow of Spirit. Postmodernism and Religion* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 69



a “mourning” for what is past,<sup>113</sup> which laments rather than lauds postmodernity. Brueggemann too defines the first stage of prophetic imagination as grieving,<sup>114</sup> facilitating “grief work”<sup>115</sup> for a society which cannot recognise or “terminate its mourning”.<sup>116</sup> Richard Middleton and Brian Walsh explicitly quote Brueggemann in constructing a Christian response to postmodernity. They write that “genuine prophetic visions and dreams” are needed to energise action. Only “prophetic discernment” can create the “prophetic community” which is needed to unlock new imaginative possibilities.<sup>117</sup> Fresh vision not nostalgic traditionalism is needed to intend the future.

In addition, Walter Wink identifies the prophet’s role as confronting the principalities and powers,<sup>118</sup> which he interprets, in terms reminiscent of the total administered society, as the socio-political “Domination System”.<sup>119</sup> To avoid abstractions, however, third world Christians will insist that Christian prophecy takes a determined stand against capitalism as a system.<sup>120</sup> Nevertheless, Christian prophecy has a different basis than merely social criticism. James Skillen, while sympathetic towards critical theory, writes that “without a firm standpoint other than the commitment to criticism itself”, the only conclusion is “relativism”.<sup>121</sup> Non-Christian critics want the “consequences but not the presuppositions of Biblically prophetic criticism”, because a real God threatens autonomous “human solidarity”.<sup>122</sup>

<sup>113</sup> Charles Levin, *Jean Baudrillard. A Study in Cultural Metaphysics* (Hemel Hempstead: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1996), pp. 16 f

<sup>114</sup> See Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, pp. 44 f

<sup>115</sup> Colin Murray Parkes, *Bereavement. Studies of Grief in Adult Life* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975), pp. 94 ff

<sup>116</sup> Baudrillard, *Simulations*, p. 46

<sup>117</sup> J. Richard Middleton & Brian J. Walsh, *Truth is stranger than it used to be. Biblical Faith in a Postmodern Age* (London: SPCK, 1995), pp. 190 ff

<sup>118</sup> See Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers. Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992), pp. 7 f

<sup>119</sup> *ibid*, pp. 65 f

<sup>120</sup> See Robinson Cavalcanti, “The Prophetic Role of the Church in Church-State Relations,” *EFAC Bulletin* (Special Issue, Trinity 1996), p. 9

<sup>121</sup> James W. Skillen, “Prophecy, Critique, Action,” *Westminster Theological Journal* (Vol. 58, No. 1, 1996), p. 86

<sup>122</sup> *ibid*, p. 99



### 3. THE REVELATION OF PROPHECY

#### Revelation

Although prophecy must embrace the political, it also needs the spiritual. A critical prophetic *Message* needs a *Manner* that includes revelation. Although Wallace accepted that “revitalisation movements” could theoretically arise on a secular base,<sup>123</sup> he stated that “with few exceptions” founders experienced moments of “inspiration or revelation”.<sup>124</sup> Christian prophetic revelation draws on Protestantism’s emphasis of discontinuity with history, the inbreaking Word; and Catholicism’s stress on the continuity of the Spirit’s immanence. Prophecy embraces the “polarity” of explicit conscious, and implicit unconscious revelation.<sup>125</sup> According to Ellul, only God’s revelation “produces, evokes, and entails liberation from the powers and structures of the world”.<sup>126</sup> Moltmann too spoke of revelation’s “promise” of fulfilment beyond present limitations.<sup>127</sup> Admittedly these refer to the once-for-all revelation in Christ. Avery Dulles, however, while affirming the impossibility of new “public revelation” of doctrine, endorses the Spirit’s work in “continuing, dependent, or repetitive revelation”.<sup>128</sup> Whilst this protects the Magisterium’s authority, it also permits non-authoritative “private revelation” to individuals and communities.<sup>129</sup>

This relationship between revelation and prophecy is commonplace among charismatics. Peter Hocken has compared “the relationship between Biblical inspiration and Pentecostal prophecy, and on the other hand, the relationship between Scripture and tradition, as taught by Vatican II”.<sup>130</sup> Daniel McConnell, a critic of neo-

<sup>123</sup> Wallace, “Revitalization Movements,” p. 428

<sup>124</sup> *ibid*, p. 425

<sup>125</sup> John McIntyre, *The Shape of Pneumatology* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1997), pp. 232

<sup>126</sup> Ellul, *The Ethics of Freedom*, p. 96

<sup>127</sup> Jurgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope* (London: SCM, 1967), pp. 42 ff

<sup>128</sup> Dulles, *Models of Revelation*, p. 234

<sup>129</sup> *ibid*, p. 19

<sup>130</sup> Hocken, “The Significance and Potential of Pentecostalism,” p. 25



Pentecostalism, has meanwhile advocated “a doctrinal reformation” incorporating “revelatory gifts” and the Reformational principle of *Sola Scriptura*.<sup>131</sup> The identification of revelation and prophecy is so strong that Grudem maintains it is “revelation” which makes prophecy “different from other spiritual gifts”.<sup>132</sup> His definition of prophecy, however, as the human “report” of something the Holy Spirit brings to mind<sup>133</sup> ignores the “command to communicate the revelation”.<sup>134</sup> Prophecy is the communication (rather than ‘proclamation,’ to include non-verbal, symbolic or acted prophecy) of revelation (however mediated - by dreams and visions, spontaneous insight and intuition, rational thought and social analysis, or Bible study), but it is the communication of revelation which has been given in order to be communicated. Moreover prophecy might occasionally be itself revelation. Nicholas Wolterstorff writes that, in prophecy (as Bickle suggested) God Himself speaks, where speech is an “illocutionary act”<sup>135</sup> performed through “deputized discourse” - the prophet.<sup>136</sup>

### Mediated Immediacy

Colin Gunton criticises the contemporary search for “revelatory immediacy, a direct apprehension of the content of the faith”.<sup>137</sup> Instead Gunton claims revelation is always “mediated,” for example through creeds and confessions.<sup>138</sup> God’s revelation to Biblical prophets is “unrepeatable”<sup>139</sup> because, following Reformed theology, Gunton asserts there was only one “specific revelation period”.<sup>140</sup> Hence, as for his mentor, Karl Barth, Church proclamation is only “recollection of past revelation and in

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<sup>131</sup> McConnell, *op cit*, pp. 189 f

<sup>132</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Leicester: IVP, 1994), pp. 1056 f

<sup>133</sup> Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today*, p. 139

<sup>134</sup> Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit*, p. 45

<sup>135</sup> Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse. Philosophical reflections on the claim that God speaks* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 13

<sup>136</sup> *ibid*, pp. 42 ff

<sup>137</sup> Gunton, *A Brief Theology of Revelation*, p. 4

<sup>138</sup> *ibid*, p. 18

<sup>139</sup> *ibid*, p. 108

<sup>140</sup> *ibid*, p. 113



expectation of coming revelation” - at the parousia.<sup>141</sup> Both, however, miss faith’s experiential dimension. Barth wrote that “Jesus Christ is not directly present to us”;<sup>142</sup> which Gunton echoed: “Wherever Jesus is now...we do not have a direct, unmediated relation to him”.<sup>143</sup> Gunton suggests that revelation is like our knowledge of persons, because people give themselves to be known.<sup>144</sup> Thus all knowing involves mediation.

Although our knowing is mediated, however, it is still true knowing, albeit partial. Rahner’s formulation of Catholicism’s sacramental theology of signs can help to clarify the mediation of prophecy, by giving symbols a “function of mediation which is not at all opposed in reality to the immediacy of what is mediated by it, but is a mediation to immediacy”.<sup>145</sup> Like empirical persons, God’s presence and His voice are truly im-mediate to us, although not un-mediated. Thus physical, cultural, intellectual, and personal mediations do not detract from the immediacy of God’s sacramental presence within them. Aquinas also distinguished between “*lumen*” (the Divine revelation) and “*species*” (the ideas or images which clothe it). God might give both *lumen* and *species*, or He may communicate only the former, with the content being supplied by memory, imagination or senses.<sup>146</sup> Thus prophecy may be mediated, but retain the immediacy of Divine communication.

Rahner widened his discussion of the sacraments to include the “ontology of symbolic reality in general”.<sup>147</sup> Calvin similarly referred to Augustine’s comment that Biblical prophets proclaimed “sacraments announcing something future”.<sup>148</sup> This could provide theological underpinning for contemporary symbolic prophecy.<sup>149</sup> If prophecy

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<sup>141</sup> Barth, *Church Dogmatics I.1*, p. 99

<sup>142</sup> *ibid*, p. 138

<sup>143</sup> Gunton, *op cit*, p. 108

<sup>144</sup> *ibid*, p. 22

<sup>145</sup> Karl Rahner, “The Sacraments,” in Rahner, *Theological Investigations Vol. IV*, p. 244

<sup>146</sup> Synave & Benoit, *op cit*, pp. 64 ff

<sup>147</sup> Rahner, *op cit*, p. 222

<sup>148</sup> Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion Vol. II*, p. 581

<sup>149</sup> See Mark Cartledge, “Interpreting Charismatic Experience: Hypnosis, Altered States of Consciousness and the Holy Spirit?” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* (No. 13, October, 1998), p. 132



includes symbol, then Rahner's theology of mediation may reconcile theophile with theologian. Barth however warns against so elevating human epistemological ability that it denies revelation's basis in Grace.<sup>150</sup> Revelation is a "capability which is given" through the Holy Spirit, not a natural disposition.<sup>151</sup> Properly understood though, Thomist epistemology stresses the Spirit's role in the soul's connatural knowledge of God.<sup>152</sup>

## Art

Several commentators have noted the similarity between artistic and prophetic inspiration. Matthew Fox for example suggests that the artist enables us to "see" reality.<sup>153</sup> For some this becomes gnostic dualism,<sup>154</sup> but Fox insists that art be linked to prophetic social transformation.<sup>155</sup> Here he follows Brueggemann,<sup>156</sup> who similarly describes the alternative vision of the artist as a threat to totalitarianism.<sup>157</sup> Although it is now commonplace to depict Biblical prophets as poets,<sup>158</sup> this view derives from nineteenth century romanticism, which transformed the idea of the "natural genius" into the "romantic genius".<sup>159</sup> Although influenced by Biblical accounts of prophecy,<sup>160</sup> poets like Coleridge and Blake were also in the tradition of Renaissance neo-Platonic hermeticism.<sup>161</sup> Such "poet-prophets" were thought to directly apprehend the

<sup>150</sup> See Barth, *Church Dogmatics I.1*, p. 194

<sup>151</sup> *ibid*, p. 456

<sup>152</sup> See Jacques Maritain, *The Degrees of Knowledge* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1959), pp. 260 ff

<sup>153</sup> Fox, "Introduction", in *Wrestling with the Prophets*, p. xiii

<sup>154</sup> See Peter Rogers, *A Painter's Quest. Art as a Way of Revelation* (Santa Fe, NM: Bear & Co, 1987), p. 16

<sup>155</sup> See Matthew Fox, "Art and Spirituality. An Address at the Art Institute of Chicago", *CSN Creation Spirituality Network Magazine* (Vol. 12, No. 1, Spring 1996), p. 45

<sup>156</sup> Fox, *Original Blessing*, p. 257

<sup>157</sup> See Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, p. 45

<sup>158</sup> See John Eaton, "The Prophets as Poets", in Grace Emmerson (Ed.), *Prophets and Poets. A Companion to the Prophetic Roots of the Old Testament* (London: The Bible Reading Fellowship/London: SPCK, 1994), pp. 16 ff

<sup>159</sup> Walter E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind* (New Haven/ London: Yale University Press, 1957), p. 152

<sup>160</sup> *ibid*, p. 314

<sup>161</sup> See Frederick Burwick, *Poetic Madness and the Romantic Imagination* (University Park, Penn: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), p. 22; & Peter Ackroyd, *Blake* (London: Minerva, 1996), pp. 150 ff



“spiritual world”,<sup>162</sup> the madness of the “furor poeticus” giving them greater insight than reason could provide.<sup>163</sup>

The closure of the rationalist universe caused a search for alternatives in the supposed freedom of artistic inspiration. This Platonic conjunction of “poetic frenzy” and “divine madness”<sup>164</sup> is repeated by R. D. Laing’s work on schizophrenia<sup>165</sup> and by Marcuse who so despaired of social change that he attributed to art the role of discovering “unrealized possibilities”,<sup>166</sup> opening up another order of “transcendence within the one world”.<sup>167</sup> The same stereotype of the artist as visionary was implied by the 1982 Anglican and Catholic Committee for Prophecy and Vision, which produced a report and an exhibition about art in worship.<sup>168</sup>

Abraham Heschel however points out that romanticism’s reaction against rationalism distorts prophecy, by replacing “historical exegesis” with “aesthetic understanding”.<sup>169</sup> But the poet’s inspiration has no “experience of the initiative of another subject acting in place of the poet”.<sup>170</sup> At most it is “agentless revelation”.<sup>171</sup> Agnostics, like Robert Carroll, who identify prophets as “poets, probably intellectuals, and possibly ideologues”,<sup>172</sup> express an ideological “epistemological scepticism”<sup>173</sup> which avoids the threat of Divine intervention by doubting that prophets “speak *for* anything or

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<sup>162</sup> Charles Roden Buxton, *Prophets of Heaven and Hell. Virgil, Dante, Milton, Goethe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1945), p. 109

<sup>163</sup> Burwick, *op cit*, p. 2

<sup>164</sup> R. Hackforth, *Plato’s Phaedrus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), pp. 56 ff

<sup>165</sup> See R. D. Laing, *The Politics of Experience and the Bird of Paradise* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971), p. 118

<sup>166</sup> Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man*, p. 187

<sup>167</sup> *ibid*, p. 65

<sup>168</sup> Peter Burman & Kenneth Nugent (Eds.), *Prophecy and Vision* (Bristol: Committee for Prophecy and Vision, 1982)

<sup>169</sup> Heschel, *The Prophets*, p. 371

<sup>170</sup> *ibid*, p. 388

<sup>171</sup> Wolterstorff, *op cit*, p. 23

<sup>172</sup> Robert P. Carroll, “Poets Not Prophets: A Response to ‘Prophets through the Looking Glass,’” in Davies, *The Prophets*, p. 42

<sup>173</sup> Robert P. Carroll, “Whose Prophet? Whose History? Whose Social Reality? Troubling the Interpretive Community Again: Notes towards a Response to T. W. Overholt’s Critique,” in *ibid*, p. 89



anybody”.<sup>174</sup>

Apart from neo-ritual symbolic prophecy, Charismatic-Pentecostal prophecy usually regards art not aesthetically but instrumentally, as a tool for evangelism or spiritual warfare.<sup>175</sup> Charismatic worship may also include prophetic singing.<sup>176</sup> Here, spontaneous inspiration prompts a congregation member to sing, in English or in tongues, a song to God. More specialised ministry may develop from this, as the performance of prophetically inspired songs<sup>177</sup> or the singing of personal prophecies.<sup>178</sup> The Conservative-Protestant model, unlike the Charismatic-Pentecostal, recognises the validity of the artist’s vocation, but rejects any revelatory quality to art<sup>179</sup> because this expresses a Platonic notion of sacramentality in nature and gives the artist a privileged insight into God’s Word.<sup>180</sup>

## Religious Content

Although prophecy sometimes uses poetic language, there are some purposes, such as communicating precise information or condemning specific injustices, which require “conceptual and non-poetic language”.<sup>181</sup> Therefore not only revelation but prophecy is sometimes propositional,<sup>182</sup> not simply emotivist metaphor. Although God’s Word does more than communicate “information”,<sup>183</sup> it does tell a person “something, which

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<sup>174</sup> *ibid*, p. 93

<sup>175</sup> See Colin Harbinson, “Art and Revelation,” & Steve Scott, “Art and Prophetic Confrontation,” in Colin Harbinson, Steve Scott, Rupert Loydell, & Rick & Brenda Beerhorst, *Art Rageous. Seminar notes and essays from Cornerstone Festival 1991* (Chicago, IL: Cornerstone Press, 1992), pp. 7 ff, 25 ff

<sup>176</sup> See LaMar Boschman, *The Prophetic Song* (Bedford, TX: Revival Press, 1986)

<sup>177</sup> See Tony Cummings & Keith Bennett, “Understanding Prophetic Music”, *Crossrhythms* (No. 19, February/March 1994), pp. 34 f

<sup>178</sup> See Charles and Paula Slagle, “Worship and Prophetic Ministry,” *Southampton School of Prophecy. Developing Your Prophetic Calling* (Audio Tape) (Pioneer Direct, n.d.)

<sup>179</sup> See Adrienne Chaplin, “Creative Idealism,” *Third Way* (Vol. 8, No. 8, December 1985), p. 21

<sup>180</sup> See Adrienne Chaplin & Richard Harries, “Beauty and the Priest,” *Samson’s Wig* (No. 3, September 1995), pp. 7 ff

<sup>181</sup> Frank Burch Brown, *Transfiguration. Poetic Metaphor and the Languages of Religious Belief* (Chapel Hill/London: the University of Carolina Press, 1983), p. 12

<sup>182</sup> cf. Richard Swinburne, *Revelation. From Metaphor to Analogy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992)

<sup>183</sup> Gunton, *op cit*, p. 72



he constantly does not know".<sup>184</sup> This, while pertaining to God's self-revelation, is by no means contentless. Prophecy is not therefore solely the product of human reflection on an initial ineffable "secret experience", as Georg Fohrer describes it.<sup>185</sup> For prophecy to impart content means opposing the "essentialist" reduction of religious experience to a common root.<sup>186</sup> Linguistically, it is impossible to have a pure experience, without conceptual form.<sup>187</sup> Sociologically too, religious experiences are learned within a tradition that makes them possible.<sup>188</sup> Theologically, prophetic revelation, unlike natural revelation, carries its own interpretation.<sup>189</sup> Prophecy is not therefore a matter of *lumen*-led interpretation of supposedly neutral *species*-facts. Discerning what is the case forms an essential aspect of prophetic understanding.

A similar argument exists against the identification of prophet and shaman. Hollenweger equated them and Biblical scholar Robert Wilson used the anthropological concept of "intermediary" to describe both.<sup>190</sup> Wilson's anthropological description has successfully maintained the "strangeness" of prophecy against rationalistic reductionism,<sup>191</sup> but has reduced prophecy to a common phenomenological denominator. Its use by academics also endorses questionable spiritual practices. Overholt, for example, employs Wilson's "intermediary" concept to defend "channelling" as an authentic form of contemporary Christian prophecy,<sup>192</sup> and celebrates Eliade's religious commitment to "planetary humanism".<sup>193</sup>

<sup>184</sup> Barth, *Church Dogmatics I.1*, p. 61

<sup>185</sup> Georg Fohrer, *History of Israelite Religion* (London: SPCK, 1973), pp. 238 f

<sup>186</sup> Michael Stoeber, "Inrovertive Mystical Experiences: Monistic, Theistic, and Theo-monistic," *Religious Studies* (Vol. 29, No. 2, June 1993), pp. 169 ff

<sup>187</sup> See Steven T. Katz, "Language, Epistemology, and Mysticism," in Steven T. Katz (Ed.), *Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis* (London: Sheldon, 1978), pp. 22 ff

<sup>188</sup> See James V. Spickard, "For a Sociology of Religious Experience," in Swatos, *op cit*, pp. 109 ff

<sup>189</sup> See Wolterstorff, *op cit*, p. 28

<sup>190</sup> Robert R. Wilson, *op cit*, pp. 27 f

<sup>191</sup> Alfred Schutz, "Phenomenology and the Social Sciences," in Thomas Luckmann (Ed.), *Phenomenology and Sociology* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978), p. 136

<sup>192</sup> Overholt, *op cit*, p. 177

<sup>193</sup> Thomas W. Overholt, *Prophecy in Cross-Cultural Perspective: A Sourcebook for Biblical Researchers* (Atlanta: GEO: Scholars Press, 1986), p. 7



It raises therefore the “propriety” of imposing foreign terms where people do not use them as self-ascriptions.<sup>194</sup> Cox uses shamanism to refer to two completely different people - Pentecostal pastor Yonggi Cho and feminist theologian Chun Hyun Kyung.<sup>195</sup> Cox admits that Pentecostals would not like this association. Any shamanic influence on Cho, for instance through visualisation techniques, is unconscious;<sup>196</sup> Kyung however deliberately invokes shamanic spirits to construct an ecological theology.<sup>197</sup> Any surface similarity can be clarified by identifying their respective prophetic models as Charismatic-Pentecostal and Creational-Pagan. What may be said is that spiritual experiences may generate shamanic “traits” or similarities in different religions.<sup>198</sup>

## Realism

Another reason for opposing the conflation of religious experience into a uniform singularity is the possibility of real communication from God, which is a necessary precondition for prophecy, for the prophet is a “summoned self”.<sup>199</sup> This in turn requires a commitment to theological realism, that there is someone speaking to us.<sup>200</sup> This suggests a link between prophecy and orthodoxy, which is lent support by Peter Berger’s earlier claim that an American “renaissance of religion” could only develop from conservative Judaeo-Christian groups.<sup>201</sup> Later, Berger’s own theological views clouded his sociological judgment, so he now prefers liberal “mellowness” to neo-orthodox confrontationalism, which he sees as more suited to a situation of crisis like

<sup>194</sup> I. M. Lewis, *Religion in Context. Cults and Charisma* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 79

<sup>195</sup> See Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, pp. 238 ff

<sup>196</sup> See Paul Yonggi Cho, *The Fourth Dimension* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1979), pp. 9 ff

<sup>197</sup> See Chun Hyun Hyung, “Come Holy Spirit - Renew the Whole Creation,” in Michael Kinnamon (Ed.), *Signs of the Spirit. Official Report of the Seventh Assembly, Canberra, Australia, 7-10 Feb. 1991* (Geneva: WCC, 1991), pp. 39 ff

<sup>198</sup> Michael Ripinsky-Naxon, *The Nature of Shamanism. Substance and Function of a Religious Metaphor* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993), p. 70

<sup>199</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Figuring the Sacred. Religion, Narrative, and Imagination* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1995), p. 274

<sup>200</sup> See Keith Ward, *Religion and Creation* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), p. 124

<sup>201</sup> Peter L. Berger, “A Call for Authority in the Christian Community,” in Peter L. Berger, *Facing Up To Modernity* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1979), p. 235



Nazi Germany than democratic America.<sup>202</sup> He fails to see, however, the continuing need for confrontational prophecy against “repressive tolerance”.<sup>203</sup>

For non-realist theology (such as that held by West, Grey, and implicitly Leech and Fox), as Don Cupitt expresses it, the “prophetic type of experience of God is no longer available to us.”<sup>204</sup> Zygmunt Bauman concurs when he writes that postmodernity “denies in advance the right of all and any revelation to slip into the place vacated by the deconstructed and discredited rules”.<sup>205</sup> It is capitalism’s logic, however, to derogate any “longing for the absolute”.<sup>206</sup> Postmodern theology updates Protestantism’s “cold bourgeois subjectivity”,<sup>207</sup> in which “the silence of God’ is the only revelation available.<sup>208</sup> These theologies are actually atheism, or at most Huxley’s humanistic “religion without revelation”.<sup>209</sup>

Dulles however remarks that revelatory symbols “denote and disclose what is ontologically real”, and actually “mediate the reality they signify”.<sup>210</sup> Moreover, Donald MacKinnon argued that “metaphysical idealism” provides no basis for political critique.<sup>211</sup> Idealism privileges the Church’s current experience over historical tradition when only the Christ event, grounded in matter and history, provides the resources to challenge injustice.<sup>212</sup> This is especially important in face of postmodernity’s rejection of metanarratives. Prophetic criticism depends upon a metanarrative, which provides grounds for critique. As Milbank proposes, critique

<sup>202</sup> Berger, *The Heretical Imperative*, p. 155

<sup>203</sup> See Marcuse, “Repressive Tolerance”

<sup>204</sup> Don Cupitt, *Taking Leave of God* (London: SCM, 1980), p. 85

<sup>205</sup> Zygmunt Baumann, *Intimations of Postmodernity* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. ix

<sup>206</sup> Rudolf Siebert, “Horkheimer’s Sociology of Religion,” *Telos* (No. 30, Winter 1976-77), p. 144

<sup>207</sup> *ibid*, p. 128

<sup>208</sup> Thomas J. J. Altizer, “The Beginning and Ending of Revelation,” in Scharlemann, *op cit*, p. 107

<sup>209</sup> See Julian Huxley, *Religion without Revelation* (London: Watts & Co. 1941)

<sup>210</sup> Dulles, *Models of Revelation*, p. 267

<sup>211</sup> Donald MacKinnon, “Lenin and Theology,” in Donald MacKinnon, *Explorations in Theology 5* (London: SCM, 1979), p. 25

<sup>212</sup> See Donald MacKinnon, “Absolute and Relative in history. A Theological reflection on the Centenary of Lenin’s Birth,” in *ibid*, p. 62



relies upon a “counter-ontology” which is dependent upon an underlying “metanarrative realism”.<sup>213</sup> Otherwise Cultural-Political and Creational-Pagan prophecy will be reduced to pragmatic (sic) expediency.

Against postmodern relativism this means that prophecy implies belief in objective truth, which is more than “true *for us*”.<sup>214</sup> An acceptance of sociological pluralism, essential for a post-Constantinian era, does not entail an acceptance of theological pluralism. Indeed this normative pluralism is a “multifaceted hologram of a single reality: the market”.<sup>215</sup> As Sobrino noted, conservative support for pluralism can be an excuse for political inaction.<sup>216</sup> Prophetic truth then is not only other-worldly truth about God, but this-worldly truth about sin. Therefore prophecy is not compatible with postmodern notions of hermetically sealed traditions retelling their stories. Prophecy, like evangelism, implies proclamation to other communities, as well as strengthening the boundaries of one’s own.<sup>217</sup> And this means prophecy requires a defence of “truth,” even (according to Fernandez-Armesto) the prophetic-oracular “truth that we are told”.<sup>218</sup>

Conviction of truth, however, does not mean certainty. While awaiting the eschaton, any prophetic initiative will be provisional. Writing from Ireland lends humility as Terence McCaughey warns against “premature specificity” in prophetic pronouncements. In practice, “small groups in disagreement is sometimes the only form” for prophetic action today.<sup>219</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, pp. 381 f

<sup>214</sup> Walker, *Telling the Story*, p. 203

<sup>215</sup> *ibid*, p. 157

<sup>216</sup> See Sobrino, *op cit*, p. 198

<sup>217</sup> See Gilbert Meilaender, “Victim and Victor,” *First Things* (No. 56, October 1995), pp. 47 ff

<sup>218</sup> Fernandez-Armesto, *Truth. A history for the perplexed* (London: Bantam Press, 1997), pp. 46 ff

<sup>219</sup> Terence P. McCaughey, *Memory and Redemption. Church, Politics and Prophetic Theology in Ireland* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1993), p. 147



#### 4. THE VISION OF PROPHECY

##### Dualism

Eschatology provides a basis for prophetic criticism and the criticism of prophecy, from the standpoint of the future Kingdom which has invaded history. Eschatological hope provides an exit from historical closure. Eschatology seems, however, to imply a dualistic framework of two separate realms. Cultural-Political and Creational-Pagan models reject dualism, because it erects a sacred-secular divide relegating God to an other-worldly realm irrelevant to society. Consequently, as in Creational-Pagan prophecy, transcendence is redefined. The wholly other God is rejected because the idea suggests the world's unreality, and strengthens hierarchical power. Instead transcendence is reframed as, for example, the power of connectedness.

Creational-Paganism has (belatedly) highlighted ecology for prophecy,<sup>220</sup> and recovered God's immanence against deistic distancing of Him as Wholly Other. However, transcendence and immanence mean different things.<sup>221</sup> The creative tension between the two terms must be maintained. Ecofeminist Val Plumwood condemns the obliteration of immanence implicit in pantheism whereby the particular becomes merely an aspect of the universal;<sup>222</sup> and philosopher Eric Voegelin criticises the "immanentization" of transcendence, the "taking over of transcendent, divine functions by the mundane".<sup>223</sup> Voegelin's own preference for Hellenistic philosophy over Biblical history, however, means he rejects the transformative possibilities within history deriving from the Kingdom's inauguration by Christ.<sup>224</sup>

<sup>220</sup> See Martin Palmer, "Ecology - Prophetic or Pathetic?" *Expository Times* (Vol. 106, January 1995), p. 100

<sup>221</sup> See Michael P. Levine, *Pantheism. A non-theistic concept of deity* (London/New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 108 f

<sup>222</sup> Plumwood, *op cit*, p. 207 n. 11

<sup>223</sup> Stephen McKnight, "Voegelin's New Science of History," in Ellis Sandoz (Ed.), *Eric Voegelin's Significance for the Modern Mind* (Baton Rouge/London: Louisiana State University, 1991), p. 66

<sup>224</sup> See Bruce Douglass, "A Diminished Gospel: A Critique of Voegelin's Interpretation of Christianity," in Stephen A. McKnight (Ed.), *Eric Voegelin's Search for Order in History* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1987), p. 149



Fox's panentheism is an unstable compound, however, dissolving into theism on one hand<sup>225</sup> and pantheism on the other.<sup>226</sup> Furthermore it portrays an impersonal deity rather than Christianity's personal God. Although Ecofeminism uses female and non-gendered cosmic images when reconstructing the God-image,<sup>227</sup> in practice the former, including the goddess, are seen as "pattern" not "person", as symbolic representation of impersonal processes.<sup>228</sup> As in Marx's criticism of Hegel, this process theology replaces the real object of the religion it cannot believe in with an idealist "philosophy of religion".<sup>229</sup> Valid nature-revelation is replaced by natural theology. Rather than a sovereign gracious act, general revelation becomes a human reading of "evidence".<sup>230</sup>

## Duality

Paradoxically, although the "other" is seen by postmodernists as overcoming the closure of transcendence,<sup>231</sup> postmodernity encourages a loss of the "other", human or divine, as part of the "isophrenic" flattening of difference.<sup>232</sup> Indeed the loss of genuine otherness leads to an "interior exoticism" fetishising ethnic, intellectual or religious styles and 'traditions.' Global capitalism reinvents the other as "fiction" for consumption.<sup>233</sup> Prophecy, however, needs a standpoint outside the englobing market from which to critique it. For this some sort of duality is needed.<sup>234</sup> If "human intelligence" is the universe "become conscious of itself",<sup>235</sup> then one cannot condemn pollution, since it is the universe's own action. A dualistic theodicy however provides

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<sup>225</sup> See Levine, *op cit*, p. 11

<sup>226</sup> See Brearley, *op cit*, p. 43

<sup>227</sup> See Elizabeth E. Green, "Reflections on Ecofeminist Theology and the Feminist Critique of Science," *Theology in Green* (Vol. 5, No. 1, Spring 1995), p. 43

<sup>228</sup> Donna Wilshire, "The Uses of Myth, Image, and the Female body in Re-visionary Knowledge," in Alison M. Jaggar & Susan R. Bordo (Eds.), *Gender/Body/Knowledge. Feminist Reconstructions of Being and Knowing* (New Brunswick/London: Rutgers University Press, 1989), p. 99

<sup>229</sup> Karl Marx, "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts," in Karl Marx, *Early Writings* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975), p. 394

<sup>230</sup> G. C. Berkouwer, *General Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MICH: Eerdmans, 1955), p. 121

<sup>231</sup> Winquist, *Desiring Theology*, p. 32

<sup>232</sup> Baudrillard, *The Illusion of the End*, p. 109

<sup>233</sup> Gary Genosko, *Baudrillard and Signs. Signification Ablaze* (London/New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 130 f

<sup>234</sup> Haddon Wilmer, *Interview* (25.10.96)

<sup>235</sup> Swimme & Berry, *op cit*, p. 237



guidance for action against injustice.<sup>236</sup> Such a basis for critique is supplied by the Christian story of the “two cities”,<sup>237</sup> which supplies, Bonhoeffer wrote, a spiritual “cantus firmus” counterposing what is.<sup>238</sup> Divine sovereignty ensures there is no ultimate dualism,<sup>239</sup> but there are three distinctions or dualities necessary for any prophetic criticism:

*1. Eschatological:*

Immanence needs the counterbalance of imminence if it is not to sacralise what is. Sacramentalism’s problem is that it can divinise the status quo, but an eschatological perspective relativises the present and provides grounds for critique. So although prophecy entails more than prediction, it does intend the future - God’s future. This implies a transformational eschatology compatible with postmillennialism and amillennialism, which discerns partial fulfilments within history. Premillennialism’s insistence on crisis and judgment, however, provides a corrective against a processual gradualism. Transcendence, for Milbank, can then become the world’s Divinely-guided “infinite tensional progress towards its own eminence”.<sup>240</sup> To avoid abstractions, however, this inaugurated eschatology would manifest itself in a visible alternative community.<sup>241</sup> The temporal duality of present and future, the coming of God’s Kingdom, is therefore complemented by a sociological duality in the present. Prophecy critiques what is now, in the light of God’s future and in the context of His *avant garde*, the Church.

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<sup>236</sup> See McGuire, *op cit*, p. 44

<sup>237</sup> Milbank, *op cit*, pp. 389 ff

<sup>238</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison* (Glasgow: Fontana, 1959), pp. 99 f

<sup>239</sup> Storkey, *Interview*

<sup>240</sup> John Milbank, “Problematizing the Secular: the post-modern agenda,” in Berry & Wernick, *op cit*, p. 41

<sup>241</sup> See Schlabach, *op cit*, p. 200



## 2. *Ontological:*

Prophetic critique is not only in the light of what will be and is coming, but also in the light of what now is - in heaven. The duality between visible and invisible, earthly and heavenly, provides another aspect of prophetic vision - literally so - by having visions. The “prophetic vocation” involves discerning and declaring what happens in the heavenlies.<sup>242</sup> Against charges of Platonism, one might make four comments. Firstly, Platonism at least recognises a “cosmic order that transcends all change”.<sup>243</sup> Secondly, the “imagery of the other world” is not arbitrary, but drawn from “men’s experience of fellowship with God”.<sup>244</sup> Thirdly, Divine-human “dialogue” depends on the distinction.<sup>245</sup> Fourthly, this need not imply that the heavenly is more ‘real’ than the earthly. Instead they form aspects of one created reality. Consequently when Walter Wink incorporates Kelsey’s Jungianism into his “integrated view” of spirituality as “withinness”, his reductionism excludes true otherness.<sup>246</sup>

## 3. *Theological:*

Because “heaven” where God dwells is “the spiritual side of the reality created by God”,<sup>247</sup> ontological duality rests upon a prior Creator-creation duality. Prophetic criticism depends upon this. Conservative-Protestant critics of the New Age are so concerned to maintain God’s difference from the world, that they miss His presence within it.<sup>248</sup> Some duality between God and creation, however, is essential.<sup>249</sup> What happens in nature or history in a fallen world is not always just, and can be judged in

<sup>242</sup> See Paul S. Minear, *To Heal and To Reveal. The Prophetic Vocation According to Luke* (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), pp. 31 ff

<sup>243</sup> Arthur F. Holmes, *Contours of a World View* (Grand Rapids, MICH: Eerdmans, 1983), p. 144

<sup>244</sup> Arthur Michael Ramsey, *Sacred and Secular. A Study in the otherworldly and this-worldly aspects of Christianity. the Holland Lectures for 1964* (London: Longmans, Green & co. Ltd., 1965), p. 30

<sup>245</sup> Hans Urs Von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. Volume II* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1990), p. 177

<sup>246</sup> Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers. Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), p. 5

<sup>247</sup> *ibid*, p. 474

<sup>248</sup> See Tony Pearce, *The Biblical Basis of a Christian Response to the New Age Movement* (London: PWM Team ministries, 1990), p. 9

<sup>249</sup> See Loren Wilkinson, “Gaia Spirituality: a Christian critique,” *Themelios* (Vol. 18, No. 3, April 1993), p. 7



the name of a Creator God who has spoken: once authoritatively through Scripture regarding ultimate intentions and many times relatively (but not relativistically) through the Church regarding contemporary issues.

### Transcendence

This duality implies transcendence as a necessary presupposition of prophecy. Colin Gunton has questioned what he calls the Thomist “spatial” conception of transcendence which sees God as “out there”.<sup>250</sup> Instead of God’s spatial separateness, Gunton follows Barth’s definition of God’s transcendence as His freedom to be immanent, related to the creature without losing the distinctiveness of either.<sup>251</sup> Barth, however, still refers to God as the “genuine counterpart” related to but other than humanity.<sup>252</sup> Furthermore, he claims that God possesses space, “His own place”, because the relatedness within the Trinity presupposes distance.<sup>253</sup> Transcendence, grounded in relatedness and communication within the Trinity, thus paradoxically guarantees (prophetic) relatedness and communication from God to humanity.<sup>254</sup> Prophecy is then the immanent expression of transcendence.

William Placher accuses those who reinterpret God’s transcendence into comprehensible mystery-less categories, of domesticating transcendence. “Process theologians”, like Matthew Fox and Mary Grey, reimagining God as the interrelations of the world, lose real transcendence. “Deconstructionist theologians”, like Cornel West, lacking any revelation from beyond, are reduced to silence. Functionalist theologians, like (implicitly) Jim Wallis and Ken Leech, reinterpret religion in terms of social

<sup>250</sup> Colin Gunton, “Transcendence, Metaphor, and the Knowability of God,” *Journal of Religious Studies* (Vol. XXXI, Pt. 2, October 1980), pp. 501 ff

<sup>251</sup> See Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics II.1* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1957), p. 303

<sup>252</sup> Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics III.3* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1961), p. 89

<sup>253</sup> Barth, *Church Dogmatics II.1*, p.

<sup>254</sup> cf. Colin Gunton, *The One, The Three and The Many* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 180 ff



usefulness.<sup>255</sup> “Non-contrastive” definitions of transcendence as “productive agency” within the world,<sup>256</sup> however, which Placher supports, similarly collapses transcendence into processual immanence. Only a “contrastive” tension between transcendence and immanence, which one does not try to resolve and therefore lose, can supply grounds for prophetic critique in the name of a God who is simultaneously ‘out there’ and ‘in here’.

David Wells provides a robust restatement of Divine transcendence, although as a conservative evangelical he would not support a strong Charismatic-Pentecostal prophetism. For Wells, God’s transcendence includes:

1. His “greatness” above the world;
2. His “moral purity” or holiness (ignored by postmodernists who seek to retain His demands for political justice but not personal morality);
3. His “incomprehensibility”;<sup>257</sup>

In a world that, far from being postmodern, represents the logic of late modernity and the ethos of late capitalism,<sup>258</sup> prophetic critique can only be applied by “those who are countercultural by way of being otherworldly”.<sup>259</sup>

### Pictures and Words

Conservative-Protestantism accents absolutes but the Charismatic-Pentecostal *Manner* engages with several postmodern themes. For example, visions may flourish where the visual is preferred to the verbal.<sup>260</sup> David Hilborn writes that this explains

<sup>255</sup> William C. Placher, *The Domestication of Transcendence. How Modern thinking about God Went Wrong* (Louisville, K: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), p. 183

<sup>256</sup> *ibid*, p. 111 n. 1.

<sup>257</sup> Wells, *God in the Wasteland*, pp. 122 ff

<sup>258</sup> *ibid*, pp. 216 ff

<sup>259</sup> *ibid*, p. 151

<sup>260</sup> See Wessels, *op cit*, p. 25



the increased fascination with icons,<sup>261</sup> and perhaps therefore symbolic prophecy. It also suggests the appropriateness of visionary experiences themselves. In a culture where virtual reality promotes the creation of alternative symbolic universes without any physical referents, visions and symbolic prophecy may be a relevant mode of Divine incursion.<sup>262</sup> Such other-worldly “cyber-prophecy”<sup>263</sup> needs however to be protected from solipsism and social irrelevance,<sup>264</sup> by incorporating Catholic incarnational valuing of the body. To combine the *Messages* of socio-political ‘vision’ and mystical ‘visions’ requires sacramental general revelation of a world “charged with the grandeur of God”,<sup>265</sup> and charismatic private revelation of heavenly perspectives. The *Messenger* will be a seer whose *Manner* of reception demands ‘seeing’ on several levels: namely physical observation of what is; socio-political interpretation; imaginative symbolic perception;<sup>266</sup> and spiritual visions. The *Manner* of communication will similarly include verbal proclamation, political action, and sacramental symbolism.

Despite postmodern hostility to the verbal, there is also a recovery of orality.<sup>267</sup> This has implications for prophetic speech, since the Word comes as revelation “in the act of its being spoken in time”.<sup>268</sup> Historically prophecy was originally “oral” face-to-face communication,<sup>269</sup> and today Pentecostalism encourages oral participation in worship drawing on popular traditions.<sup>270</sup> Although evangelicals fear postmodernity detracts

<sup>261</sup> See David Hilborn, *Picking Up the Pieces. Can Evangelicals Adapt to Contemporary Culture?* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1997), pp. 134 ff

<sup>262</sup> See C. J. Keep, “Knocking on Heaven’s Door: Leibniz, Baudrillard and Virtual Reality,” *E Journal* (EJournal@Albany.bitnet, State University of New York) (Vol. 3, No. 2, September 1992)

<sup>263</sup> Jane Thorington-Hassell, *Personal Conversation*

<sup>264</sup> See Jeffrey Fisher, “The Postmodern Paradiso: Dante, Cyberpunk, and the Technosophy of Cyberspace,” in David Porter (Ed.), *Internet Culture* (New York/London: Routledge, 1996), p. 125

<sup>265</sup> Gerard Manley Hopkins. “God’s Grandeur,” in *The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 66

<sup>266</sup> cf. Annie Dillard, “Seeing,” in *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), pp. 14 ff

<sup>267</sup> See Walker, *Telling the Story*, pp. 93 ff

<sup>268</sup> Barth, *Church Dogmatics I.1*, p. 118

<sup>269</sup> Fohrer, *History of Israelite Religion*, p. 238

<sup>270</sup> See Cheryl Bridges Johns, *Pentecostal Formation. A Pedagogy among the Oppressed* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), pp. 87 ff



from the sermon,<sup>271</sup> here is an opportunity for inspired preaching and sermonic experimentation. The enthusiasm for story-telling and personal communication among “Generation X” may provide a context for revived prophetic preaching.<sup>272</sup> In addition, postmodern “communicative abundance” permits a variety of persuasive speech, including “sermons”.<sup>273</sup> It is no accident therefore that the *Manner* of even non-charismatic prophetic practitioners (e.g. Wallis, West, Leech, Fox, Grey) employ public speaking to communicate directly with an audience.

Charismatic-Pentecostal prophecy also addresses directly postmodern fragmentation and decentring of the person as subject.<sup>274</sup> With the vanishing of the economic forms which created the individual subject,<sup>275</sup> oral personal prophecy provides reassurance in conditions of social anomie. Some charge this with being “trivial” - personal assurances that God loves them.<sup>276</sup> Critics, however, neglect prophecy’s social context. Prophecy may be a response to crisis, as Clifford Hill suggests, but there are “several levels of crisis” - cultural and personal.<sup>277</sup> Indeed social problems manifest as individual traumas. Prophecy addressing individual needs may therefore update prophecy’s connection with healing.<sup>278</sup> The prophetic *Message* will therefore incorporate the social and individual, political and personal, ecological and egological.

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<sup>271</sup> See Hilborn, *ibid*

<sup>272</sup> See Coupland, *op cit*

<sup>273</sup> John Keane, The humbling of the intellectuals. Public life in the era of communicative abundance,” *The Times Literary Supplement* (No. 4978, 28 August 1998), p. 15

<sup>274</sup> See Middleton & Walshe, *op cit*, pp. 46 ff

<sup>275</sup> See Max Horkheimer, “The End of Reason,” in Andrew Arato & Eike Gebhart (Eds.), *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978), p. 37

<sup>276</sup> Douglas McBain, *Eyes that see. The Spiritual Gift of Discernment* (Basingstoke: Marshall-Pickering, 1986), p. 101

<sup>277</sup> Overholt, *Channels of Prophecy*, p. 113

<sup>278</sup> See Minear, *op cit*, p. 75



## Experience

Contemporary prophecy needs to be Tertullianist.<sup>279</sup> With his suspicion of pagan philosophy and preference for Jerusalem over Athens, his critique of idols is applicable to the critique of simulacra,<sup>280</sup> and his emphasis on the Church's separation from the "massa perditionis" is relevant to post-Constantinianism.<sup>281</sup> Moreover, he combined the rational and the revelatory, when as a Christian intellectual he nevertheless supported Montanism's "seemingly outrageous" female ecstatic prophecy.<sup>282</sup>

Another resource for a contemporary prophetic *Manner* is pietism. Hilborn suggests that pietism, an experience-based alternative to evangelicalism's rationalist tradition of doctrinal orthodoxy, may be well-suited to postmodernism's romantic revival.<sup>283</sup> pietism's stress on personal experience, and its contemporary expression in ecstatic prophecy, may be a culturally relevant disclosure of God in a cynical addictive society.<sup>284</sup> Pietist prophecy needs counter-balancing with dogma and social relevance, and experientialism must retain a Trinitarian experience of the Spirit as Divine Person - not an elevation of subjective experience, an immanent principle, or psychological projection, but an encounter with the ontologically real Other.<sup>285</sup> Without succumbing to enthusiasm's anti-intellectualism,<sup>286</sup> authentic prophecy must integrate the *ek-stasis* of those who are literally *en-theos*. A contribution to this is made by mysticism. Mysticism is the essential sub-soil of prophecy, as its development within several models testifies. Mysticism encourages the transmission of charisma, the prevention

<sup>279</sup> See Cecil M. Robeck Jr., *Prophecy in Carthage. Perpetua, Tertullian, and Cyprian* (Cleveland, OH: the Pilgrim Press, 1992), pp. 97 ff

<sup>280</sup> See Genosko, *op cit*, p. 30

<sup>281</sup> See Forrester, *op cit*, p. 20

<sup>282</sup> Christine Trevett, "Gender, Authority and Church History: A Case Study of Montanism," *Feminist Theology* (No. 17, January 1998), p. 24

<sup>283</sup> See Hilborn, *op cit*, p. 69

<sup>284</sup> cf. Stibbe, *Times of Refreshing*, pp. 71 ff

<sup>285</sup> See William Ralph Inge, "Psychology and the Mystics-I," in William Ralph Inge, *Lay Thoughts of a Dean* (New York/London: G. P. Puttnam's Sons, 1926), p. 329

<sup>286</sup> See R. A. Knox, *Enthusiasm. A Chapter in the History of Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950), p. 3



of routinisation, and the the avoidance of superficiality.

Notwithstanding various mediations, the “*ab extra*” of prophecy is the Spirit.<sup>287</sup> An essential component of any prophetic model is therefore pneumatology, not only theologically but experientially in a personal experience of the Spirit. This Trinitarian relation of Spirit and Son is relevant to prophecy because “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy”.<sup>288</sup> Because the Spirit has a “floodlight ministry” glorifying Jesus,<sup>289</sup> prophecy points to Him. Christ is the “indispensable precondition of all theological knowledge” and knowledge of God.<sup>290</sup> So although our Introduction questioned naive appeals to Scripture in trying to understand prophecy,<sup>291</sup> finally it is to Scripture and its witness concerning Christ that one must turn.

This necessitates more than a theological Christocentricity. It also requires pietism’s spiritual devotion to the person of Jesus, and Anabaptism’s principled obedience to Jesus’ actual commands as recorded in Scripture.<sup>292</sup> Prophecy depends upon a Jesus-centredness marked by doctrine, devotion and discipleship. Then, if Jesus indeed occupies the “prophetic office” attributed by Scripture, whatever our prophetic model, we have to ask:

*“What shall we do to have Christ for our teacher?”*<sup>293</sup>

<sup>287</sup> Woods, *The Prophets of Israel*, pp. 95 ff

<sup>288</sup> *Revelation 19.10*

<sup>289</sup> Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit*, p. 65

<sup>290</sup> Thomas F. Torrance, *Theological Science* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 52

<sup>291</sup> See pp. 1 ff

<sup>292</sup> See Kraus, “An Anabaptist Spirituality for the Twenty-first Century,” p. 26

<sup>293</sup> Thomas Watson, *A Body of Divinity* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1983[1692]), p. 170



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## OTHER RESEARCH MATERIALS

### 1. INTERVIEWS

(Note: (T) refers to telephone interviews)

#### **CONSERVATIVE-PROTESTANT PROPHECY**

Kenneth Brownell	Pastor, East London Tabernacle	31.3.98
Roy Clements	Pastor, Eden Baptist Church, Cambridge	17.4.97
Christopher Green	Vicar, Emmanuel Church, Surbiton	3.12.96
Os Guinness	Trinity Forum, Washington DC	6.8.97
Ranald Macaulay	Director, L'Abri Fellowship, Liss, Hants	28.5.96
Peter Masters (T)	Pastor, Metropolitan Tabernacle, London	24.2.96
John Stott	Rector Emeritus, All Souls Langham Place, London	12.4.97

#### **CHARISMATIC-PENTECOSTAL PROPHECY**

Doug Bailey	Tehillah Prophetic Ministries, Newham, London	9.9.96
Desmond Cartwright	Archivist, Donald Gee Centre, Mattersey	30.9.97
Rick Compton	Office Manager, MorningStar	11.8.97
Bobby Conner	Staff member, MorningStar, Prophet	11.8.97
Graham Cooke	United Christian Ministries, Southampton	12.9.96
John Denning	Prophetic Director, Basingstoke Community Church	5.11.97
Joel Edwards	General Secretary, Evangelical Alliance	14.6.96
Roger Ellis	Leader, Revelation Fellowship, Chichester	18.7.96
Clifford Hill (1) (T)	Centre for Contemporary Christian Ministry	15.7.96



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Clifford Hill (2)		6.9.96
Clifford Hill (3) (T)		18.3.97
Peter Fenwick	Pastor, Sheffield;	
	Centre for Contemporary Christian Ministry	23.10.96
John Holcombe	Pastor, MorningStar	7.8.97
R.T.Kendall	Pastor, Westminster Chapel, London	26.9.96
Billy Kennedy	Leader, Sublime - Youth Service	
	Southampton Community Church	16.6.97
Roger Mitchell	Leader, Passion Church, Camden, London	30.4.96
Tony Morton	Apostle, Southampton Community Church	
		16.6.97
Hugh Osgood (1)	Pastor, Cornerstone Christian Centre, Bromley	12.4.96
Hugh Osgood (2) (T)		13.5.98
David Pytches	ex-Vicar, St. Andrews, Chorleywood	18.10.96
Martin Scott	Pioneer	11.7.96
Paul Slennett (1) (T)	Jesus is Alive Ministries	24.9.97
Paul Slennett (2)		17.11.97
John Starr	Vicar, St. Marks, Kennington, London	26.6.96
Jim Stephens	Director, East London Bible Training Centre	8.2.96
Ray Stokes	Pentecostal Pastor, Texas	8.2.96
Michael Sullivant	Prophetic Director, Metro Christian Fellowship,	
	Kansas City, MO	14.8.97
Steve Thompson	Vice-President, MorningStar	11.8.97
Greg Valerio (T)	CRED; Revelation Fellowship, Chichester	13.6.97
Noel Woodroffe	Director, Breakthrough Ministries, Trinidad	21.9.66



**CULTURAL-POLITICAL PROPHECY**

Simon Barrow	ex-Convenor COSPEC;	
	CCBI Missions Secretary	17.7.97
Rose Berger	Pastor, Sojourners Fellowship	1.8.97
John Biggs (T)	CCBI visit to Serbia; Baptist Union Council	24.2.97
Peter Broadbent	Archdeacon Northolt, London	25.4.97
Andrew Bradstock	Theology Dept., LSU, Southampton	27.5.96
Chris Bryant	Chairperson, Christian Socialist Movement	20.10.97
Andrew Chandler	Lecturer, Queens College, Birmingham	23.10.97
Keith Clements	ex-CCBI International Secretary; Gen. Sec.	
	Conference of European Churches	13.5.96
Martin Eden	Secretary for Public Affairs,	
	Evangelical Alliance	27.10.96
Mark Farr	P.A. to Jim Wallis, Sojourners Fellowship	30.7.97
Pat Gaffney	Secretary, Pax Christi	17.12.96
David Haslam	Secretary, Commission for Racial Justice, CCBI	7.2.96
Adrian Hastings	Theology Dept., Leeds University	22.10.97
Alan Kreider	Centre for the Study of Culture,	
	Regents College, Oxford	11.12.96
Brian Lee	Rector, St. Botolph's Church, London	16.10.97
Kenneth Leech (1)	Jubilee Group	10.5.96
Kenneth Leech (2)		6.10.97
Paul Oestreicher	International Secretary, Coventry Cathedral	8.10.96
Margaret Pickup (T)	Saltley Trust, Birmingham	26.11.97
Ian Rathbone	ex-Secretary COSPEC	14.5.96
Chris Rowland	Theology Dept., Cambridge University	11.12.96
Marty Shupack	Mennonite Central Committee, Washington DC	1.8.97



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Mark Thiessen-Nation (1)	Director, Mennonite Centre, London	9.1.97
Mark Thiessen-Nation (2)		10.6.97
Stephen Timms	MP, Labour Party	5.2.97
Jim Wallis (1)	Sojourners Fellowship, Washington DC	26.8.96
Jim Wallis (2)		1.9.97
Bill Wylie-Kellerman	Sojourners, Executive	24.5.97

### **CREATIONAL-PAGAN PROPHECY**

Rex Ambler	Theology Dept., Birmingham University	16.7.97
Brian Bates (T)	Professor of Shamanic Studies, Essex University	9.3.98
Mary Grey (1)	Professor, LSU, Southampton	25.5.96
Mary Grey (2)		13.9.96
Jean Hardy	Creation Spirituality Centre, London	9.7.96
Jane Horton	Staff Worker, Creation Spirituality Centre, London	1.7.96
Robert Murray	ex-Lecturer, Heythrop College, London	17.12.96
Anne Primavesi	Theology Dept., Bristol University	20.2.97
Donald Reeves	Rector, St. James, Piccadilly, London	7.5.96
Adrian Smith	Roman Catholic Priest	25.6.96
Nick Williams	Alternatives Programme, London	1.7.96

### **OTHER**

Luke Bretherton (T)	Abundant Christian Nightclub	20.6.96
Steve Dale (T)	Committee, Community of Aidan & Hilda	14.5.97
Doug Gay	Leader, Host Congregation, Hackney, London	14.2.96
Jeri Jehu-Appiah	Leader, Musama Christo Disco Church, London	4.12.97



James Ozige (1)	Apostle,	
	Cherubim & Seraphim Church, London	29.9.97
James Ozige (2) (T)		7.1.98

## ACADEMIC

John Colwell	Lecturer, Spurgeon's College	3.3.97
Robin Gill	Theology Dept., University of Kent	6.11.97
Tim Grass (T)	Writer on Catholic-Apostolic Church	13.10.97
Colin Gunton	Theology Dept., Kings College, London	12.2.96
Peter Hocken	Roman Catholic Priest	21.4.97
Colin Marchant	Baptist Urban Missiologist, Newham, London	8.2.96
Stuart Murray	Lecturer, Spurgeon's College	31.1.96
Martyn Percy (1)	Chaplain, Christ's College, Cambridge	28.11.96
Martyn Percy (2) (T )	Lecturer, Lincoln College	4.11.97
Ian Randall	Lecturer, Spurgeon's College	3.3.97
Calvin Seerveld	Institute for Christian Studies, Toronto	26.8.96
Tom Smail	Vicar; Author	25.11.97
Elaine Storkey	Director, London Institute of Contemporary Christianity	10.7.96
Max Turner	Lecturer, London Bible College	30.10.97
Haddon Wilmer	Theology Dept., Leeds University	25.10.96
Nigel Wright	Pastor, Altrincham Baptist Church	24.10.96



## **2. FIELD WORK AND VISITS**

### **CONSERVATIVE-PROTESTANT PROPHECY**

**1996**

May - *L'Abri Fellowship*, Liss, Hants

**1998**

May 10 - *St. Helen's Church Morning Service*, Bishopsgate, London

### **CHARISMATIC-PENTECOSTAL PROPHECY**

**1996**

February - *Word and Spirit Conference* (R.T.Kendall & Paul Cain), Westminster  
Chapel, London

September - *Westminster Chapel Evening Service*, London

September 19-21 - *Apostolic and Prophetic Conference* (Noel Woodroffe), Ilford,  
London

October 14-15 - *Contemporary Christian Ministries Leadership Consultation* (Clifford  
Hill), Bawtry Hall, Derbyshire

November - July 1997 - *School of Prophecy, United Christian Ministries* (Graham  
Cooke), St. Mark's Church, Kennington, London

**1997**

March 12-15 - *Raising the Standard Conference, United Christian Ministries*, (Graham  
Cooke), Southampton Community Church

May 31 - *Southampton Community Church, Youth Service - Sublime*

June - *Sowing the Seeds of Revival* meetings (Dale Gentry), Marsham St., London

June 1 - *Southampton Community Church, Morning Service*

June 4 - *Wise and Master Builders. Apostolic and Prophetic Conference* (Noel



June 4 - *Wise and Master Builders. Apostolic and Prophetic Conference* (Noel Woodroffe), Christ Message Ministries, Hackney, London

June 8 - *Revelation Fellowship, Morning Service*, Chichester

June 8 - *Revelation Fellowship, Warehouse Service*, Chichester

August 7-13 - *Morning Star Fellowship* (Rick Joyner), Charlotte, North Carolina

August 14-22 - *Passion for Jesus Conference*, Kansas City, Missouri

October - *Mattersey Hall, Assemblies of God College & Donald Gee Centre for Pentecostal and Charismatic Research*, South Yorkshire

October 25-27 - *Revelation Fellowship, Warehouse Exposed Conference*, Chichester

## 1998

October 10-11 - *Revelation Fellowship, Centre Opening Weekend*, Chichester

## **CULTURAL-POLITICAL PROPHECY**

## 1996

June 14-15 - *Mission on the Margins Conference* (Ken Leech), Birmingham

August 23-26 - *Greenbelt Festival* (Jim Wallis)

October 27 - *St. Botolph's Church, Eucharist* (Ken Leech), Aldgate, London

## 1997

January - *Mennonite Centre*, London

May 24 - *William Stringfellow. A Theology of Freedom Conference*, Oxford

July 30 - August 3 - *Sojourner's Fellowship*, Washington DC

August 1 - *Mennonite Central Committee*, Washington DC

October - *Urban Theology Unit*, Sheffield

December - *Pax Christi*, London

## 1998



**1998**

January 20 - *East London Anabaptist Study Group*, Victoria Park Baptist Church

May 26 - *East London Anabaptist Study Group* (Ken Leech), Victoria Park Baptist Church

September 6 - *Mennonite Church Service*, Tottenham, London

**CREATIONAL-PAGAN PROPHECY****1996**

May 23 - *Festival of Mind Body and Spirit*, London

May 26-28 - *Liberating the Vision Summer School*, La Sainte Union College (Mary Grey), Southampton

May 26 - *St. James Church Whitsun Service*, Piccadilly, London

June 4 - *Natural Grace* (Matthew Fox & Rupert Sheldrake), Alternatives Programme, St. James Church, Piccadilly, London

July 1 - *Creation Spirituality Centre*, St. James, Piccadilly, London

July 8 - *Down to Earth* (Donald Reeves), Alternatives Programme, St. James, Piccadilly, London

September-October - *Wisdom For An Evolving Planet* (Weekly Course), Centre for Creation Spirituality, St. James Church, Piccadilly, London

**1997**

March 4 - *Heaven or Hell? Christianity and the New Age* (Donald Reeves & William Bloom), Alternatives Programme, St. James, Piccadilly, London

**OTHER****1996**

March 29 - *Dual Perspectives in Religion and Psychiatry: Disciplines of Soul and Mind - differing attitudes to the human?* Institute of Psychiatry, Maudesley Hospital, London

**1997**

November 2 - *Cherubim and Seraphim, Annual General Meeting and Thanksgiving Service*, Southwark, London

**1998**

February 7 - *Death of a Princess. English Lausanne Consultation*, City Temple, London

May 8-10 - *Reimagining Worship Conference*, Hackney London

**3. RECORDINGS**



### **3. RECORDINGS**

#### **AUDIO**

##### **Charismatic-Pentecostal Prophecy**

*Further Selections from the Kansas City Prophets* (Belper, Derbys: Banner Ministries, KCP08[2])

*Selections from the Kansas City Prophets* (Belper, Derbys: Banner Ministries, KCP08[1])

Steve Shearer, *The Inside Story* (Belper, Derbys: Banner Ministries, KCP09)

Larry Thompson, *When the Prophets Come to Town* (Belper, Derbys: Banner Ministries, LC16c)

Jewel Van Der Merwe, *Joel's Army* (Belper, Derbys: Banner Ministries, KCP10)

Jewel Van Der Merwe, *The New Order* (Belper, Derbys: Banner Ministries, KCP14)

Pioneer School of Prophecy, *Developing Your Prophetic Gifting* (Conference n.d.), (Pioneer Direct)

Roger Ellis, *The New Rhythm*, & Pete Greig, *Generation X* (Chichester: Talk Shop, Revelation Church, 1997)

Dale Gentry, *The Prophetic Voice in the Local Church* (Series), (Fort Worth, TX: Dale Gentry Ministries)

Charles and Paula Slagle, "Worship and Prophetic Ministry", *Southampton School of Prophecy. Developing Your Prophetic Calling* (Audio Tape) (Pioneer Direct, n.d.)

Ken McGreavy, *Understanding the Prophetic* (London: Ichthus Media Services)

Rick Joyner, *The Prophetic Ministry and Gifts* (Series), (Charlotte, NC: Morning Star Publications, RJ06-003 - RJ06-007)

Steve Thompson, *Prophetic Ministry Training Series* (Series), Charlotte, NC: Morning Star Publications, ST01-001 - ST01-005)

### **Creational-Pagan Prophecy**

Matthew Fox, *Cosmic Wisdom*, (St. James Church, Piccadilly, London: Kerygma Tapes, KT 9204)

### **VIDEO**

#### **Charismatic-Pentecostal Prophecy**

Bill Hamon, *God's Prophetic Movement* (Atlanta Regional Prophetic conference, 1990)

*Prophecy Today Conference*: John Mumford, *What are the Prophets Saying?* (St. Andrew's Church, Chorleywood, London, 7 March 1990)

